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AN OUTLINE

OF THE

Historical Evidence

OF THE TRUTH OF THE

CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

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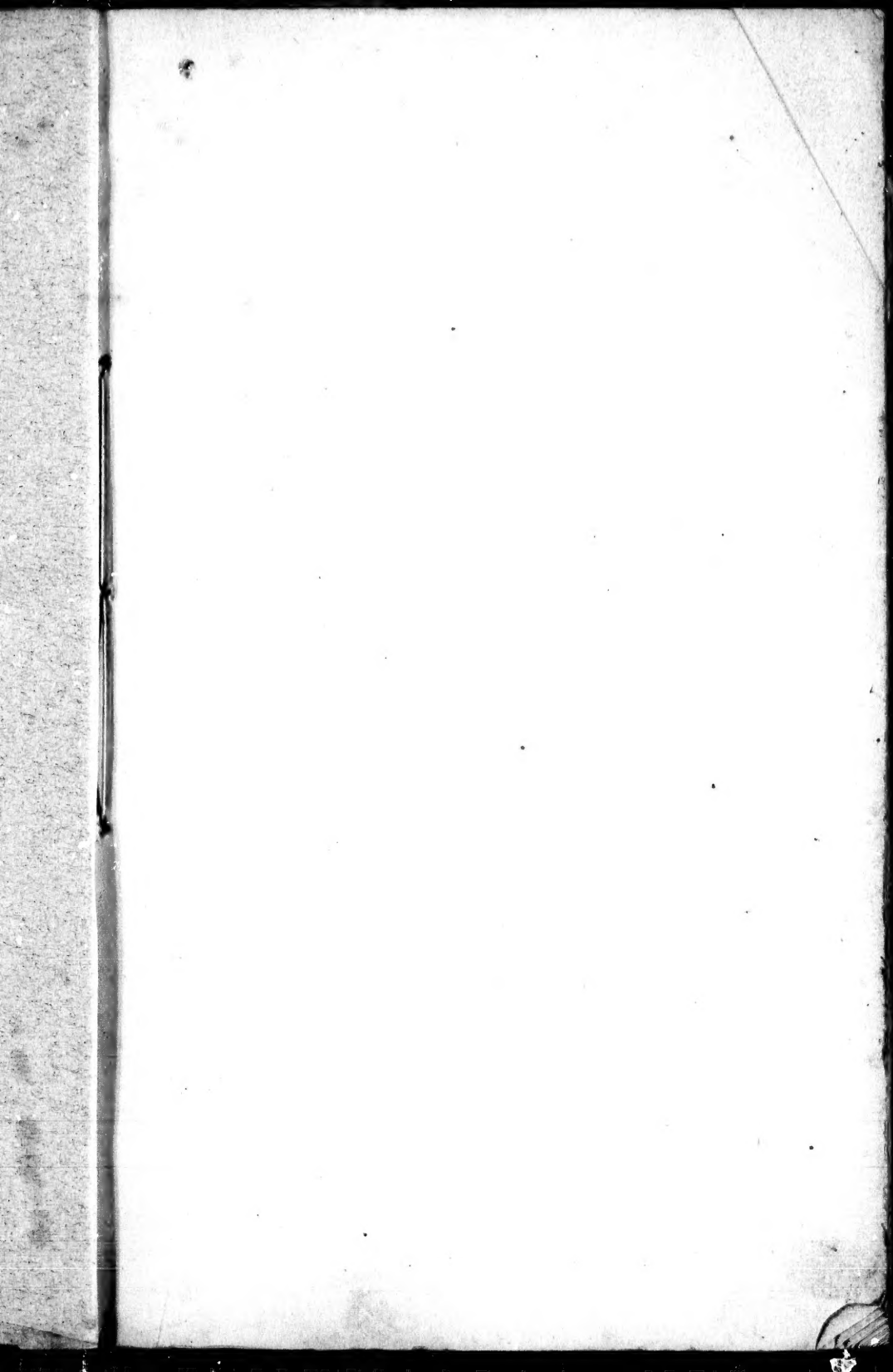
BY

ALEXANDER MACKNIGHT,

Professor of Theology, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Halifax, N. S. :

A. & W. MACKINLAY, GRANVILLE STREET,
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PREFACE.

THE following little work is not intended for old disciples, already established in the faith ; but for readers who are exposed to the assaults of scepticism, and need to make sure of the ground on which they stand. In form it is didactic rather than controversial, the aim being to sketch an outline of the direct historical evidence of the truth of the Gospel history. The most cursory reader will perceive that that evidence cannot be narrowed down to a question about the completeness of a *catena* of quotations from this or that book of the New Testament.

embraces a much wider field. Quotations and biographical references are not wanting : but the faith of the primitive Church, the tenor of its life, private and social, its monumental ordinances, commemorative of fact and symbolical of doctrine, as well as its sacred literature, all forcibly attest the story of divine love, as displayed in the mission and work of Christ.

The force of this kind of evidence, however, is not fully appreciated at a glance. A patient study of the facts of history is requisite, if we would place ourselves in the midst of a bye-gone age, and feel that we are among realities, not groping after shadows. Perhaps some sceptical reader will cast his eye over these pages, and then ask impatiently, Is that all ?—Well, it is not all. It is only a sketch. But it indicates a line of research that can be prosecuted, with the aid of translations, by a common English reader. And it presents evidence sufficient to establish, at the very lowest estimate, a strong *prima facie* case in favor of the truth of the Christian revelation. A moral obligation is thus laid upon the inquirer to examine into the matter more deeply, and solve for himself the problem of the origin of Christianity. It is the most momentous problem, whether of history or of philosophy, to which the human mind can bend its powers ; and no man who cares for truth—not to speak of God's favour, or of the life to come—can afford to treat it lightly, or dismiss it with a sneer.

An investigation into the truth of Christianity may be undertaken with the greater hopefulness of success, inasmuch as historical testimony is not the only kind of evidence in its favour. There is an evidence afforded by the fulfilment of prophecy, which may also be termed historical, for the utterance of the prediction is a fact of history, whilst the fulfilment is matter either of history or of observation. There is a biographical evidence afforded by the operation of divine grace on the hearts and lives of individuals :—an evidence worthy of the serious consideration of inquirers who have not yet experienced the results of any such operation themselves. There is an intuitive or intuition evidence, based on the accordance of the teachings of Christianity with what we

feel ourselves to be, to need and to crave. And the study of this evidence will prepare the way for an introduction to an experimental evidence, the most satisfactory of all, when we try for ourselves the gospel remedy for human ills, taste the sweetness of that peace which passeth all understanding, behold the beauty of the Lord, and are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord. No man is entitled to pass judgment against the claims of Christianity who has not honestly and earnestly explored these various lines of investigation; for the evidence of its truth is the cumulative result of many convergent trains of argument. The manifestation of the supernatural is manifold: in power over the course of nature—usually designated miracle; in knowledge of the secret, the distant, and the future; in wisdom, working out the noblest ends through the fittest instrumentality; in power over the mind and heart of man—usually designated grace. Christianity, as a phase in the history of human progress; Christianity, as a fulfilment of Jewish prophecy, and in its turn a prophecy of things now receiving fulfilment; Christianity, as a solution more profound than philosophy can offer of the mysteries of being and of destiny; Christianity, as a moral and spiritual power, enlightening the mind, purging the conscience, enlarging the heart and transforming the life;—in short, Christianity in all its aspects and activities has to be accounted for, on merely natural principles, before the attitude of the unbeliever can be justified. The attempt thus to account for its phenomena is hopeless; for assumptions and explanations must be resorted to that are more incredible than revelation, or incarnation, or miracle. The unbeliever would require a stronger faith in his philosophy than that of the Christian in his bible.

Dartmouth, May, 1876.

HISTORICAL EVIDENCE FOR CHRISTIANITY.

BY PROFESSOR MACKNIGHT.

I. INTRODUCTORY.

Fashions change, in the clothing of thought, as in other clothing. The aphoristic utterances of an oriental sage, present, to modern taste, as uncouth an aspect as his flowing garments. Singly they may be terse and telling; but the absence of links and ligatures to define their mutual relation, and bind them together into a continuous chain of thought, is an offence to us. A different style of reasoning prevailed in mediæval Europe: thought wore the garb of an interminable string of syllogisms. There was no lack of continuity in scientific discourse, when the Aristotelian logic was dominant. But the palmy days of deductive reasoning are at an end. A syllogism requires premises; and we have become chary, in this enlightened age, of granting the assumptions formerly made and assented to without dispute. We must have facts to begin with:—facts patent to eye and ear, measured with balances and foot-rule, verified by experiment under diversified conditions. Any amount of wildest theorizing may follow; but facts must fill the foreground. This predilection for the forms and methods of inductive investigation is largely a matter of fashion. Like other fashions it may be pushed to an absurd extreme, as when pure geometry is made an experimental science. And our pride in this method of discovering and establishing truth has less of solid foundation than we usually suppose. Aristotle used his eyes and ears as carefully as we do.

It is not denied that a right method is of great importance, alike for the acquisition of knowledge and the communication of it. But a method adapted to one subject is not necessarily adapted to all subjects. Were it needful, we might protest against making the method of research employed in the physical sciences a bed of Procrustes, to which investigation must conform even in departments of knowledge based not on experiment but on testimony or moral intuition. The narrowing tendency of devotion to one line of thought—of working constantly in one groove—has often been remarked on. The tanner thinks there is nothing like leather. When the bootmaker meets with a distinguished visitor, he is apt to mark—not the fire of his

eye, or the dignity of his demeanour, but—the fit and polish of his boots. The man whose eye is never lifted higher than to the footprints of his Creator may come to see nothing but prints, and conclude that the marks grew of themselves :—that no foot ever made them. We are entitled to protest against the demand of physical philosophers for physical methods in theology as nothing more than one of the *idola specus*.

Nay more, the assertion might be hazarded that even in the physical sciences the mode of *discovering* general truths is not *merely* inductive, but rather reflective or meditative. Thought that is creative or inventive in its character is usually a kind of regulated reverie. The mind is chained down, by a continuous effort of attention, to a given subject, but allowed to roam freely over all the surroundings of the central theme. The attempt to discover a law or formula that shall embrace all the facts or satisfy all the conditions even of a physical problem, is an exercise of mind more like putting together the pieces of a puzzle than solving an algebraic equation. The solution is hit upon, rather than worked out by a semi-mechanical process of inductive logic. When the mind is saturated with the subject by close meditation on it, new views arise and gleam forth as if by inspiration. The ancient exercise, now banished to the nursery, of solving riddles, would probably be as useful a training for the art of discovering general laws as the study of inductive method. In short, method is the test and exponent of thought, rather than its creator.

However, the inductive fashion reigns. And we may as well submit to it, whether we altogether approve or not ; just as a sensible man conforms to the head-gear of his contemporaries, though, had the question been an open one, he might have preferred a cocked hat for picturesqueness, or a tarboosh for comfort. This is one reason why the historical evidence of the truth of christianity requires re-statement in our day. The old chronological method, beginning with the state of the world nineteen centuries ago, is distasteful to modern savans. The evidence must be presented in terms and after a method adapted to the scientific habits of the age. Another reason for attempting thus to re-cast the material composing the historical evidence, is that the unbelief of the present day is more radical in its character than that of last century, and requires to be met on its own ground.

We begin, then, with affirming the existence of Christendom :—a fact as incontrovertible as the existence of the Coal Measures, or of the Old Red Sandstone. And the question we propose for consideration is, How is that fact to be accounted for ? What is the origin of the Christian religion ? Is it from heaven or of men ?

Christendom embraces a considerable proportion of the human race :—the most intelligent and most highly civilized

nations of the world—those farthest advanced in the arts and sciences, and animated by the noblest and most generous impulses. Whatsoever is greatest and best among mankind is to be found within the Christian pale. This fact meets us at the very outset, and ought to weigh, with a serious-minded sceptic, in favor of Christianity. Religions may fairly be judged of by the same practical test as individuals. "By their fruits ye shall know them." The culture and civilization, intellectual, moral, social, political and philanthropic, which have grown out of Hinduism or Buddhism, not to speak of nature-worship or ancestor-worship, can stand no comparison with the culture which has sprung up in Christian lands and is nurtured by Christian influences. The Brahmin may rival the European in intellectual subtlety; the Buddhist may equal him in self-control: but mental keenness and moral force, exercised through centuries of pantheistic speculation, have not availed to create a civilization like that of Christendom.

But let us proceed with our enquiry. Christendom, as it exists to-day, presents us with four things which it will be interesting to trace to their origin, if we can: viz., a Christian creed, a christian morality, a christian worship, and a christian literature.

The plan of our investigation shall be simple. We shall first shew that Christianity is substantially the same religion as it was seventeen centuries ago; and then endeavour to trace it, through the scanty remains of primitive antiquity, to the time of its alleged origin.

II. IRENAEUS AND HIS AGE.

Christianity is substantially the same religion as it was in the last quarter of the second century.

Since that time it has multiplied the number of its adherents a hundredfold. And this increase has been gained, not mainly by the mere natural growth of population, but by conversions from paganism. And these conversions were usually made, not by violence, but by earnest witness-bearing, rational argument, and the excellence of an upright, generous, self-denying life. Throughout the third century, as well as in the second paganism was dominant in the Roman Empire, and Christians were a despised and persecuted sect. But the more they were persecuted, the more they grew, till at last they gained the upper hand, and in the fourth century Christianity became the religion of the Empire. On the fall of the Roman power before invading hordes of barbarians from the north, the work of christianizing had to be begun anew. Tribe after tribe was converted through the assiduous labors of christian missionaries, till paganism was banished from every corner of Europe. No doubt measures were sometimes taken that a modern missionary

would not approve. The conversion of a King or Queen was sometimes the turning-point in the religious history of a kingdom; and princes accustomed to the exercise of despotic power naturally employed it more or less in the sphere of religion as in other things. But a resort to violence occurred only in exceptional cases, and within a limited area. The ordinary instrument of conversion was moral suasion. In this respect the propagation of Christianity exhibits a history altogether different from that of Mohammedanism. The lust of military conquest was combined with the religious fanaticism of the Moslem; and his courage in the battle-field was stimulated by the assurance that if he fell a place of special honor and reward awaited him in heaven. A somewhat similar ardor was roused in Christendom by the crusades; but their aim was not missionary; they sought possession of the holy sepulchre. When a missionary turn was afterwards given to the crusade, it was directed not against paganism but against a purer form of Christianity than that of the crusaders. The destruction of the Albigenses was a loss and not to gain Christianity. It was not by such measures but by preaching of sin and salvation, of the grace of Christ and the judgment to come, that the pagan conquerors of Europe were converted to the Christian faith. They yielded to the power of truth and goodness. Curiously enough, too, this moral triumph was gained in direct opposition to the Darwinian law of the survival of the strongest and most prolific. The missionaries of mediæval Europe were celebrities. The history of the spread of Christianity thus affords a presumptive evidence in favor of its claims.

This by the way. Let us now advance to the proof of the position already laid down, that Christianity, though largely increased in the volume of its adherents, is substantially the same religion as it was in the last quarter of the second century. There have been deviations, in comparatively minor matters, to the right hand and to the left, developments upward and downward, for good and for evil; but the great fundamental ideas of the system, as opposed to atheism or pantheism, are altogether unchanged. To prove this, we must review the features of Christianity already specified.

1. Its Creed. Christendom, in spite of all the warfare of contending sects, possesses a common creed—that usually termed the Apostles' Creed. It is used in the Sabbath service of churches that employ a fixed liturgy; printed at the end of Catechisms; committed to memory by children, along with the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments. It is too well known to be repeated here. We need only remark that there are three fundamental points in particular on which it is directly opposed to the teachings of infidelity:—viz., the personality of God, the divinity of Christ, (as the only Son of God,) and the future life. Fatherhood is an attribute of personality, and

creation is not a physiological development but a definite work, implying intelligence, purpose, will. The same principles are set forth, with equal clearness, by Irenæus, in his statement of the rule or standard of faith held by the Church :—See Transl. (Ante-Nicene Lib.) vol. i. pp. 42, 264. The latter passage runs thus :—“ Carefully preserving the ancient tradition, believing in one God, the Creator of heaven and earth, and all things therein, by means of Christ Jesus, the Son of God : who, because of his surpassing love towards his creation, condescended to be born of the virgin, he himself uniting man through himself to God, and having suffered under Pontius Pilate, and rising again, and having been received up in splendour, shall come in glory, the Saviour of those who are saved, and the Judge of those who are judged, and sending into eternal fire those who transform the truth, and despise his Father and his advent.” Three passages of a similar kind, summarizing the faith of the Church, as handed down from earlier times, will be found in Tertullian, (Ante-Nicene Lib.,) vol. ii. pp. 16, 336; vol. iii. p. 154. Irenæus was personally conversant with the teaching of the Church in Asia Minor, Gaul and Rome. Tertullian represents the Church of Africa. If more testimony were needed, it would be easy to produce evidence from the writings of Clement that the same faith was held in the Church of Alexandria.

2. Its Morality. The moral condition of a people depends on two things :—their moral standard, and the motive power urging them to conform to it. A high morality implies the cherishing of a lofty ideal, and the operation of a powerful impulse towards realizing it. The mere possession of a good theory is of small avail, if we have no working force strong enough to overbear selfishness, subdue passion, and reduce our theory to practice. A Chinaman may be able to quote the sage maxims of Confucius, and yet live a life of unmitigated selfishness.

Video meliora, proboque ;
Deteriora sequor.

The Christian standard of morals presents two characteristic features. It calls for a spirit and temper of general philanthropy ; and it specially requires the forgiveness of injuries, and love to enemies. And Christianity supplies a peculiar motive power in the love of Christ.

We find the same standard and the same motive power in the last quarter of the second century. A few testimonies will suffice to show the superiority of Christian to heathen morality. Thus Irenæus says of the least cultivated christians of his time, ‘ Those who, in the absence of written documents, have believed this faith, are barbarians, so far as regards our language ; but as regards doctrine, manner, and tenor of life, they are *because of faith*, very wise indeed ; and they do please God, ordering their conversation in all righteousness, chastity and wisdom.’ (Vol i. p. 265.)

Clement exclaims, in his Exhortation to the Heathen, 'A noble hymn of God is an immortal man established in righteousness, in whom the oracles of truth are engraved. . . . Those who have betaken themselves to the Father, have proved good fathers to their children; and good parents to their sons, those who have known the Son; and good husbands to their wives, those who remember the Bridegroom; and good Masters to their servants, those who have been redeemed from utter slavery. . . . If thou enrol thyself as one of God's people heaven is thy country, God thy law-giver. And what are the laws? . . . Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself; to him who strikes thee on the cheek, present also the other; thou shalt not lust, for by lust alone thou hast committed adultery. (Vol. i. p. 96, 97.)

One more witness to the elevated morality of the Christian Church may here be adduced.

Tertullian says, addressing a persecutor, 'We have sent this tract to you in no alarm about ourselves, but in much concern for you and for all our enemies, to say nothing of our friends. For our religion commands us to love even our enemies, and to pray for those who persecute us, aiming at a perfection all its own, and seeking in its disciples something of a higher type than the commonplace goodness of the world. For all love those who love them; it is peculiar to Christians alone to love those that hate them.' (Vol. i. p. 46.) And in his Apology he draws a striking contrast between the vile orgies with which the heathens were wont to celebrate the festal days of the Emperors, and the chastity, sobriety and virtue of the Christians. (Vol. i. p. 113.)

The next feature of christianity, as it existed towards the close of the second century, which we proceed to notice, is

3. Its Worship. The most essential thing in christian worship is a devout heart. Worship is the utterance to God of desire, trust, gratitude, love and lowly adoration. An interesting specimen of the manner and spirit of christian worship may be found in the prayer and hymn to Christ with which Clement concludes his work on Christ as the Instructor of youth:—vol. i. pp. 342—5. The following free translation of the hymn is copied from Schaff's 'Christ in Song.'

Shepherd of tender youth,
Guiding in love and truth
Through devious ways;
Christ, our triumphant King,
We come thy name to sing,
And here our children bring
To shout thy praise!

Thou art our Holy Lord
The all-subduing Word,
Healer of strife!

Thou didst Thyself abase,
That from sin's deep disgrace
Thou mightest save our race,
And give us life.

Thou art the great High Priest ;
Thou has prepared the feast
Of heavenly love.
While in our mortal pain,
None calls on Thee in vain ;
Help thou dost not disdain,
Help from above.

Ever be Thou our Guide,
Our Shepherd and our Pride,
Our Staff and Song !
Jesus, Thou Christ of God,
By thy perennial word
Lead us where Thou hast trod,
Make our faith strong.

So now, and till we die,
Sound we thy praises high,
And joyful sing !
Let all the holy throng
Who to Thy Church belong,
Unite and swell the song
To Christ our King !

The devotional spirit ebbs and flows, in churches as in individual hearts. And it is a hidden thing, which the historian may find it difficult to trace in the records of past ages. But there are specific observances of worship which may afford the means of establishing the continuity of religious life in the Church's history. We select four of these, viz., Baptism, the Eucharist, the Lord's Day, and Easter.

(1.) Baptism. The sacrament of regeneration is referred to by Irenæus in the following extracts :—' Giving to the disciples the power of regeneration into God, He said to them, Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.' ' He came to save all through means of Himself—all, I say, who through him are born again to God—infants, and children, and boys, and youths and old men.' (Vol. i. pp. 334, 200.) And he describes various modes of baptism practised by heretics who improved upon the ordinance to suit their own fancy—changing the formula, mixing oil with the water, and anointing with balsam, (pp. 81-84.) Clement exhorts the heathen, ' Receive, then, the water of the Word ; wash, ye polluted ones ; purify yourselves from (idolatrous) custom, by sprinkling yourselves with the drops of truth.' (Vol. i. p. 91.) In the ' Instructor' he thus refers to the ordinance, ' Being baptized, we are illuminated ; illuminated, we become sons ; being made sons, we are made perfect ; being made perfect, we are made immortal. . . This work is variously called grace, and illumination, and perfection, and washing : washing, by which we cleanse away our sins ; grace, by

which the penalties accruing to transgressions are remitted ; and illumination, by which that holy light of salvation is beheld, that is, by which we see God clearly. Now we call that perfect which wants nothing.' . . . 'We are washed from all our sins, and are no longer entangled in evil. This is the one grace of illumination, that our characters are not the same as before our washing. And since knowledge springs up with illumination, shedding its beams around the mind, the moment we hear, we who were untaught become disciples. Does this, I ask, take place on the advent of this instruction ? You cannot tell the time. For instruction leads to faith, and faith with baptism is trained by the Holy Spirit.' (pp. 132—5.) Again, 'Milk has a most natural affinity for water, as assuredly the spiritual washing has for the spiritual nutriment. . . . Such as is the union of the Word with baptism, is the agreement of milk with water ; for it receives it alone of all liquids, and admits of mixture with water, for the purpose of cleansing, as baptism for the remission of sins.' (p. 147.)

(2.) The Eucharist. Irenæus, exposing the inconsistency of the Gnostics in observing this ordinance, and thereby offering to the Father material things belonging to the Demiurge, thus states his own view of its meaning and effect :—'As the bread, which is produced from the earth, when it receives the invocation of God, is no longer common bread, but the Eucharist, consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly ; so also our bodies, when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to eternity. Now we make offering to Him, not as though He stood in need of it, but rendering thanks for His gift, and thus sanctifying what has been created.' (Vol. i. p. 435.) Again he says, 'When the mingled cup and the manufactured bread receive the Word of God, and the Eucharist of the blood and the body of Christ is made, from which things the substance of our flesh is increased and supported, how can they affirm that the flesh is incapable of receiving the gifts of God, which is life eternal, which (flesh) is nourished from the body and blood of the Lord, and is a member of Him ? (Vol. ii. p. 59.)

If the language of Irenæus savours of consubstantiation, Clement gives a more spiritual view of the matter. 'The blood of the Lord is twofold. For there is the blood of his flesh, by which we are redeemed from corruption ; and the spiritual, that by which we are anointed. And to drink the blood of Jesus, is to become partaker of the Lord's immortality : the Spirit being the energetic principle of the Word, as blood is of flesh. Accordingly, as wine is blended with water, so is the Spirit with man. And the one, the mixture of wine and water, nourishes to faith ; while the other, the Spirit, conducts to immortality. And the mixture of both—of the water and of the Word—is

called *Eucharist*, renowned and glorious grace; and they who by faith partake of it, are sanctified both in body and soul.' (Vol. i. p. 201.)

(3.) The Lord's Day. Clement finds in Plato a foreshadowing of the Christian Sabbath. 'The Lord's Day Plato prophetically speaks of in the tenth book of the *Republic*, in these words: "And when seven days have passed to each of them in the meadow, on the eighth they are to set out and arrive in four days.'" (Vol ii. p. 284) And in another place, after alluding to the custom of fasting on Wednesday and Friday, he says that a man, 'in fulfilment of the precept, according to the Gospel, keeps the Lord's Day, when he abandons an evil disposition, and assumes that of the (true) Gnostic, glorifying the Lord's resurrection in himself.' (p. 461.)

(4.) Easter. Victor, bishop of Rome, had attempted to put an end to the diversity of usage existing in different churches as to the time of the annual commemoration of the death and resurrection of Christ, by enforcing the Roman practice with a high hand. Irenæus, on behalf of the churches in Gaul, sent him a letter of remonstrance against his conduct in this matter, in the course of which he says, "The controversy is not merely as regards the day, but also as regards the form itself of the fast. For some consider themselves bound to fast one day, others two days, others still more, while others (do so during) forty: the diurnal and the nocturnal hours they measure out together as their fasting day. And this variety among the observers (of the fasts) had not its origin in our time, but long before in that of our predecessors, some of whom probably, being not very accurate in their observance of it, handed down to posterity the custom as it had, through simplicity or private fancy, been (introduced among them.) And yet nevertheless all these lived in peace one with another, and we also keep peace together. Thus, in fact, the difference (in observing) the fast establishes the harmony of (our common) faith. And the presbyters preceding Soter in the government of the church which thou dost now rule—I mean Anicetus and Pius, Hyginus and Telesphorus, and Sixtus—did neither themselves observe it (after that fashion), nor permit those with them to do so. Notwithstanding this, those who did not keep (the fast in this way) were peacefully disposed towards those who came to them from other dioceses in which it was (so) observed, although such observance was (felt) in more decided contrariety (as presented) to those who did not fall in with it; and none were cast out (of the church) for this matter. On the contrary, those presbyters who preceded them, and who did not observe (this custom), sent the Eucharist to those of other dioceses who did observe it. And when the blessed Polycarp was sojourning in Rome in the time of Anicetus, although a slight controversy had arisen among them as to certain other points, they were at once

well inclined towards each other (with regard to the matter in hand), not willing that any quarrel should arise between them on this head. For neither could Anicetus persuade Polycarp to forego the observance (in his own way), inasmuch as these things had been always (so) observed by John the disciple of our Lord, and by other Apostles with whom he had been conversant; nor, on the other hand, could Polycarp succeed in persuading Anicetus to keep (the observance in his way), for he maintained that he was bound to adhere to the usage of the presbyters who preceded him.' (Vol. ii. p. 159-161.)

4. Its Literature. The documents composing christian literature are of two kinds—the authoritative sources of christianity, and works of a secondary or derivative character, expounding, vindicating or applying it. It is to the first class of works that we direct attention. The books now recognized as authoritative are collected together in the Bible, or, so far as the Christian is distinguished from the Jewish religion, the New Testament. The formation of the Canon, as it is termed, that is the separation of the authoritative Scriptures from other christian books, was very nearly complete in the time of Irenæus. In his extant works there are about nine hundred quotations from the New Testament, ranging over all the books except Philemon and 3 John. The only peculiarity in the Canon of Irenæus is that it seems to have included the Shepherd of Hermas, an allegorical work which has been termed, not inaptly, the Pilgrim's Progress of the primitive church. He gives no formal list of books, but his views regarding the Scriptures of the New Testament are set forth in the following extracts :—

'We have learned from none other the plan of our salvation, than from those through whom the Gospel has come down to us, which they did at one time proclaim in public, and, at a late period, by the will of God, handed down to us in the Scriptures, to be the ground and pillar of our faith. . . . For, after our Lord rose from the dead, (the apostles) were invested with power from on high when the Holy Spirit came down (upon them), were filled from all (His gifts), and had perfect knowledge. . . . Matthew also issued a written gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect, while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome, and laying the foundations of the Church. After their departure, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, did also hand down to us in writing what had been preached by Peter. Luke also, the companion of Paul, recorded in a book the Gospel preached by him. Afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord, who also had leaned upon his breast, did himself publish a gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia. These have all declared to us that there is one God, Creator of heaven and earth announced by the law and the prophets; and one Christ, the Son of God.' (Vol i. p. 258.) In a subsequent part of the

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same book, Irenæus, after refuting the Gnostics by copious citations from the four gospels, sums up as follows :—‘ Such, then, are the first principles of the Gospel : that there is one God, the maker of the universe ; He who was also announced by the prophets, and who by Moses set forth the dispensation of the law, (principles) which proclaim the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and ignore any other God or Father except him. So firm is the ground upon which these Gospels rest, that the very heretics themselves bear witness to them, and, starting from these (documents), each one of them endeavours to establish his own peculiar doctrine. For the Ebionites, who use Matthew’s Gospel only, are confuted out of this very same, making false suppositions with regard to the Lord. But Marcion, mutilating that according to Luke, is proved to be a blasphemer of the only existing God, from those (passages) which he still retains. Those, again, who separate Jesus from Christ, alleging that Christ remained impassible, but that it was Jesus who suffered, preferring the Gospel by Mark, if they read it with a love of truth, may have their errors rectified.

‘ Those, moreover, who follow Valentinus, making copious use of that according to John, to illustrate their conjunctions, shall be proved to be totally in error by means of this very Gospel, as I have shewn in the first book. Since, then, our opponents do bear testimony to us, and make use of these (documents), our proof derived from them is firm and true.’ (P. 293.) He then goes on to prove, by a variety of fanciful arguments, that it is not possible that the Gospels can be more or fewer in number than they are. There are four zones of the world, four principal winds, four faces of the cherubim. The only sect he mentions as adding to the number of the Gospels is the Valentinian, who ‘entitle their comparatively recent writing “the Gospel of Truth.”’

The quotation from Hermas runs thus :—‘ Truly, then, the Scripture declared, which says, “ First of all believe that there is one God, who has established all things, and completed them, and having caused that from what had no being, all things should come into existence.”’

In the extant works of Clement of Alexandria there are about thirteen hundred quotations from the New Testament, ranging over all the books except Philemon, 2 Peter and 3 John. He wrote comments on 2 John. (Fragments from Cassiodorus, p. 153.) The following passages indicate his views respecting the inspiration and authority of the New as well as the Old Testament :—‘ How serviceable is it to distinguish expressions that are ambiguous, and which in the Testaments are used synonymously ! . . . And if the prophets and Apostles knew not the arts by which the exercises of philosophy are exhibited, yet the mind of the prophetic and instructive spirit, uttered secretly, because all have not an intelligent ear,

demand a skilful mode of teaching in order to clear exposition. For the prophets and disciples of the Spirit knew infallibly their mind.' (Vol. i. p. 380.) 'We have, as the source of teaching, the Lord, both by the prophets, the Gospel, and the blessed apostles, "in diverse manners and at sundry times," leading from the beginning of knowledge to the end. . . . He, then, who of himself believes the Scripture and the voice of the Lord, which by the Lord acts to the benefiting of men, is rightly regarded reliable. Certainly we use it as a criterion in the discovery of things. (Vol. ii. p. 477.) Clement quotes Hermas several times, and on one occasion in such a way as to indicate a belief in his inspiration. 'Divinely, therefore, the power which spoke to Hermas by revelation, said, "The visions and revelations are for those who are of double mind, who doubt in their hearts if these things are or are not. (Vol. i. p. 469; Hermas, p. 336.) He also quotes some other ancient books of a similar kind, as the Preaching of Peter and the Traditions of Matthew. Tertullian refers to Hermas less respectfully, as 'that Hermas, whose writing is generally inscribed with the title *The Shepherd*.' (Vol. i. p. 190.)

In Tertullian there are about three thousand four hundred quotations from the New Testament, ranging over all the books except Philemon; and even this short book is explicitly referred to, at the end of his work against Marcion.

These testimonies may suffice to shew that the Christian religion is in its doctrine, morality and worship, and in the place of authority it assigns to the Scriptures of the New Testament, substantially the same as it was in the last quarter of the second century. Those who are apprehensive that a few detached quotations may convey an inadequate conception of the church of that period, can fill up the picture for themselves by reading the works of the three writers we have quoted, viz., Irenæus, Clement and Tertullian. Perhaps the same purpose will be served if we sketch the outline of an Apology written by Athenagoras, and addressed to the Emperors Aurelius and Commodus about A. D. 177. He begins with referring to the legal toleration of the worship practised by the different nations that were subject of the sway to Rome. This toleration was withheld from Christians, for no sufficient reason. They were persecuted for their mere name, however blameless in their conduct, loyal, and God-fearing. Charges were indeed brought against them, but unsupported by anything worthy of the name of evidence. No Christian had been convicted of crime; the popular rumours were baseless; and it did not comport with Roman justice that men charged with crime should be punished before they were convicted. He appeals to the Emperors for a fair trial on behalf of the persecuted christians, as a matter of common justice.

The criminal charges brought against them were three :—of

Atheism, Cannibalism and Incest. Athenagoras takes up these charges in succession, dwelling principally on the first. The Christians worship one God, who made the world, and who is separated by a wide interval from matter. He shews that both poets and philosophers had held similar views concerning God, without being accounted Atheists. Thus Euripides doubted the existence of the popular gods, and conceived of a God possessed of higher attributes than any of them.

Seest thou on high him who with humid arms,
Clasps both the boundless ether and the earth?
Him reckon Zeus, and him regard as God.'

And Sophocles :—

'There is one God, in truth there is but one,
Who made the heavens, and the broad earth beneath.'

The philosophers also taught his unity. Thus Philolaus said that all things are included in God as in a stronghold. Plato said, 'To find out the Maker and Father of this universe is difficult, and, when found, it is impossible to declare him to all.' And Aristotle spoke of him as a Living Being, consisting of soul and body—his body being the ethereal space, with the stars and planets, and his soul the Reason which presides over the motion of his body.

The Christian conception of God is based not only on reason, but also on revelation, through inspired prophets. It embraces a kind of plurality, in the distinction of the Son or Logos from the Father, whose Reason and Word he is, and through whom he manifests his power; as also in the distinction from both of the prophetic Spirit, who flows from God and returns back to him. 'Who, then, would not be astonished to hear men who speak of God the Father, and of God the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and who declare both their power in union and their distinction in order, called Atheists?'—not to speak of a multitude of angels which might be compared with the gods and demi-gods of paganism.

He next refutes the charge of Atheism by referring to the practical teachings of Christianity. "I say unto you, Love your enemies; bless them that curse you; pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be the sons of your Father who is in heaven, who causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and unjust." Then after describing the subtleties of the dialecticians, he asks, 'Who of them have so purged their souls as, instead of hating their enemies, to love them; and, instead of speaking ill of those who have reviled them, . . . to bless them; and to pray for those who plot against their lives? . . . Among us you will find uneducated persons, and artisans, and old women, who, if they are unable in words to prove the benefit of our doctrine, yet by their deeds exhibit the benefit arising from their persuasion of its truth: they

do not rehearse speeches, but exhibit good works ; when struck, they do not strike again ; when robbed, they do not go to law ; they give to those that ask of them, and love their neighbours as themselves.' Then he shews that this pure and beautiful morality springs out of the christian belief in God and in a coming judgment. 'Because we are persuaded that we shall give an account of everything in the present life to God, who made us and the world, we adopt a temperate and benevolent and generally despised method of life, believing that we shall suffer no such great evil here, even should our lives be taken from us, compared with what we shall then receive for our meek and benevolent and moderate life from the great Judge.'

The popular proof of the Atheism of the Christians was the fact that they did not offer sacrifice. Athenagoras explains that the Father and Father of the universe does not need blood, nor the odour of burnt offerings, nor the fragrance of flowers and incense. The noblest sacrifice to Him is to recognise his perfections as manifested in his works, and lift up holy hands in adoration and thanksgiving. The more specific accusation that the christians did not worship the same gods as the cities, was easily met, as there was no agreement among the heathen themselves concerning their gods. Were it otherwise, the inability of the multitude to distinguish between God and the idols made of matter is no reason why those who entertain spiritual conceptions of his nature should join in idol-worship. Nor do the christians worship the universe, but its Artificer. He assails the popular mythology as the invention of the poets ; and points out that the making of images was an art of such recent invention that the name could be given of the artist of each particular god. He criticises the Greek Theogony, which proved that the gods were not self-existent ; exposes the absurdity and immorality of the achievements ascribed to them ; and shews that the symbolical explanations of mythology, as setting forth the aspects of nature, the changes of the seasons, &c., explained away the existence of the gods. The power sometimes exercised in connexion with images, and for the support of idolatry, he ascribes to the influence of demons. Their leader, the prince of matter, tries to thwart the good that is in God, and thus perplexes the ways of providence. The fallen angels, and the souls of giants, begotten through their intercourse with women, interfere in the affairs of men. Their souls—the demons—draw men to idols ; for they are eager for the blood of sacrifices, and lick them. The gods themselves were in reality men celebrated for influence, strength or skill, so that the worship they receive is in reality man-worship. It is therefore unreasonable to charge with Atheism those who worship the true God, the Maker of the universe, and his Logos.

The charges of cannibalism and incest remain. Such tales the accusers tell of their own gods, and celebrate by mysteries.

'But we are so far from practising promiscuous intercourse, that it is not lawful among us to indulge even a lustful look. For, saith He, "he that looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." Those, then, . . . to whom a wanton look is adultery, . . . and who are to be called to an account for their very thoughts, how can any one doubt that such persons practise self-control?' He further testifies that even marriage is used in moderation, and that many, both men and women, grow old unmarried, in the hope of living in closer communion with God. And those who do marry are content with one marriage; 'for a second marriage is only a specious adultery.' "For whosoever puts away his wife," says He, "and marries another, commits adultery;" not permitting a man to send away her whose virginity he has brought to an end, nor to marry again. For he who deprives himself of his first wife, even though she be dead, is a cloaked adulterer, resisting the hand of God, because in the beginning God made one man and one woman, and dissolving the strictest union of flesh with flesh, formed for the intercourse of the race.'

Then as to Cannibalism:—'What man of sound mind, therefore, will affirm that we are murderers? For we cannot eat human flesh till we have killed some one. . . . For when they know we cannot endure even to see a man put to death, though justly, who of them can accuse us of murder or Cannibalism? Who does not reckon among the things of greatest interest the contests of gladiators and wild beasts, especially those which are given by you? But we, deeming that to see a man put to death is much the same as killing him, have abjured such spectacles. How, then, when we do not even look on, lest we should contract guilt and pollution, can we put people to death?'—And he goes on to adduce other proofs that the Christian religion promotes tenderness for human life. Procuring abortion, and the exposure of infants, are regarded by christians as murder. He then goes on to show that the doctrine of the resurrection would forbid Cannibalism. 'Who that believes in a resurrection would make himself into a tomb for bodies that will rise again? . . . As for those who are persuaded that nothing will escape the scrutiny of God, but that even the body which has ministered to the irrational impulses of the soul, and to its desires, will be punished along with it, it is not likely that they will commit even the smallest sin.' In conclusion he appeals to the Emperors for justice, declaring that the christians pray for their government, that they may receive the kingdom, sent from father, and that their empire may receive increase and addition, all men becoming subjects to their sway. And this was for the advantage of the christians, that they might lead a peaceable and quiet life, and discharge all the duties required of them by their religion.

The Apology, or plea for toleration, of which we have now

sketched the outline, is limited to the discussion of topics that bear directly on its immediate object; yet incidentally it affords sufficient materials to justify the conclusion that the christianity of Athenagoras and his times was substantially identical with the christianity of our own day.

Before leaving the more voluminous writers of the second century, we will record a remark which has occurred to us again and again in glancing over their works. Their quotations from Scripture, Old and New Testament alike, are often more or less inaccurate. This is, no doubt, due in some instances to the text in their hands differing in some passages from that which has come down to us. But generally the simple explanation is, that they quoted from memory, and sometimes adapted the form of a quotation to the exigencies of their immediate context. There were no concordances in those days. The arbitrary division of a book, for purposes of reference, into chapters and verses, was unknown. There was thus no convenient way of testing the accuracy of remembrance by turning up the passage. The life of such men as Irenæus and Clement was too short and too busy to admit of their spending half an hour or so on the verification of each reference or allusion to Scripture.

Nor did the literary habits of the age call for a pedantic accuracy of quotation which requires either an exceptionally retentive memory or diligent use of the concordance. A few examples will give a better idea of the usage of the Fathers in this matter than any general statement. Thus Irenæus represents the man of Macedonia in Paul's vision as saying, "Come into Macedonia, Paul, and help us." (Vol. i. p. 316; Acts xvi. 9.) In another passage he says that Rahab received the three spies, who were spying out all the land, and hid them at her home; (which three were) doubtless (a type of) the Father and the Son, together with the Holy Spirit (p. 460). In a third place he designates Jairus the high priest, whereas he was only a ruler of the Synagogue, and amalgamates the accounts of the raising of his daughter and of the widow's son of Nain in the following narrative:—(the Scripture) says, "The Lord took the hand of the dead man, and said to him, young man, I say unto thee, arise. And the dead man sat up, and he commanded that something should be given him to eat; and he delivered him to his mother." (Vol. ii. p. 87; Mark v. 22; Luke vii. 12.) In Clement we find similar inaccuracies. Thus he quotes from Phil. iv. 5, "The Lord is at hand; take care that ye be not apprehended empty." (Vol. i. p. 83.) 'But,' he continues, 'are ye so devoid of fear, or rather of faith, as not to believe the Lord himself, or Paul, who in Christ's stead thus entreats: Taste and see that Christ is God. (Ps. xxxiv. 8.) Specifying some of the commandments of the Decalogue, he gives as one of them, Thou shalt not corrupt boys (p. 334). 1 Cor. vii. he quotes thus, "So he that giveth his virgin in

marriage doeth well ; and he that giveth her not doeth better ; as far as respects seemliness and undistracted attendance on the Lord " (vol. ii. p. 203). Luke xiv. 26, 27 he quotes thus, " Unless ye hate father and mother, and besides your own life, and unless ye bear the sign [of the cross] " (p. 464).

III. TATIAN AND THEOPHILUS.

The remains of christian literature which have come down to us from the period intervening between the Apostolic Fathers and the time of Irenæus are very small in compass, and almost wholly apologetical in character. The church was struggling for existence, in the face of persecution. There were few men of scholarly tastes and habits among the christians ; and the circumstances of the times afforded little opportunity for prosecuting theological study or exercising literary skill. Few books were written. Fewer still survive. And the apologetical character of those which are extant makes them less available for our present purpose than works of a didactic or polemical character. A controversy with heathenism, whether aggressive or defensive, naturally gives prominence rather to the external aspects of christianity than to its inmost nature. A refutation of heresies, like that of Irenæus, leads to a discussion of doctrinal questions, and a fulness of quotation and exposition of texts, which would be altogether out of place in commending christianity to the heathen, or vindicating it from charges of cruelty and immorality that had no foundation except in the malice of its enemies.

The principal writer of this period is Justin Martyr. There are two apologists, however, of somewhat later date, who deserve a passing notice, viz., Tatian, and Theophilus of Antioch. Tatian was a disciple of Justin, but adopted some Gnostic views after his master's death, and became founder of an ascetic sect at Antioch called Encratites, or the self-controlled. His Address to the Greeks belongs to the orthodox period of his life. Theophilus became Bishop of Antioch A. D. 168. His three books addressed to Autolycus, a heathen acquaintance, present the christian argument at greater length than the work of Tatian. Both works are of the same class, and present the same picture of christianity, as the Plea of Athenagoras.

The christian conception of God stands forth in bold contrast alike to the gods of the popular mythology and the impersonal essence of philosophic speculation. 'God is a spirit, not pervading matter, but the Maker of material spirits, and of the forms that are in matter. He is invisible, impalpable, being Himself the Father of both sensible and invisible things. Him we know from his creation, and apprehend his invisible power by his works' (p. 8, 9). So Theophilus : 'He is Lord, be-

cause he rules over the universe; Father, because he is before all things; Fashioner and Maker, because he is Creator and Maker of the universe; the Highest, because of his being above all; and Almighty, because he himself rules and embraces all' (p. 54). Tatian maintains the christian doctrine of the Incarnation: 'We do not act as fools, O Greeks, nor utter idle tales, when we announce that God was born in the form of a man' (p. 27). It is evidently to the divine person who became incarnate that Theophilus refers in his account of the creation: —'God having made all things by his Word, and having reckoned them all mere bye-works, reckons the creation of man to be the only work worthy of his own hands. Moreover, God is found, as if needing help, to say, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." But to no one else than to his own Word and Wisdom did he say "Let us make"' (p. 84). Tatian sets forth the christian belief in a future life: 'We believe that there will be a resurrection of bodies after the consummation of all things . . . for the purpose of passing judgment upon them' (p. 10). He explains that the Logos made man an image of immortality (p. 11), but that he became mortal in consequence of the fall (p. 12). 'The soul is not immortal in itself, O Greeks, but mortal. Yet it is possible for it not to die. If, indeed, it knows not the truth, it dies, and is dissolved with the body, but rises again at last at the end of the world with the body, receiving death by punishment in immortality. But, again, if it acquires the knowledge of God, it dies not, although for a time it be dissolved. In itself it is darkness, and there is nothing luminous in it. And this is the meaning of the saying, "The darkness comprehendeth not the light." For the soul does not comprehend the spirit, but is preserved by it, and the light comprehends the darkness. The Logos, in truth, is the light of God' (p. 18, 19). Theophilus presents the same doctrine of a future life, with less intermixture of philosophising. 'When thou shalt have put off the mortal, and put on incorruption, then shalt thou see God worthily. For God will raise thy flesh immortal with thy soul; and then, having become immortal, thou shalt see the Immortal, if now you believe in Him' (p. 58). 'But do you also, if you please, give reverential attention to the prophetic Scriptures, and they will make your way plainer for escaping the eternal punishments, and obtaining the eternal prizes of God. For He who gave the mouth for speech, and formed the ear to hear, and made the eye to see, will examine all things, and will judge righteous judgment, rendering merited awards to each. To those who by patient continuance in well-doing seek immortality, He will give life everlasting, joy, peace, rest, and abundance of good things, which neither hath eye seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive. But to the unbelieving and despisers, who obey not the truth,

but are obedient to unrighteousness, when they shall have been filled with adulteries and fornications, and filthiness, and covetousness, and unlawful idolatries, there shall be anger and wrath, tribulation and anguish, and at the last everlasting fire shall possess such men' (p. 64).

Tatian thus depicts the christian life of his time: 'Not only do the rich among us pursue our philosophy, but the poor enjoy instruction gratuitously; for the things which come from God surpass the requital of worldly gifts. Thus we admit all who desire to hear, even old women and striplings; and, in short, persons of every age are treated by us with respect, but every kind of licentiousness is kept at a distance. And in speaking we do not utter falsehood' (p. 36). And he contrasts the celebrated women of Greek antiquity with the christian women of his own time. 'Sappho is a lewd, love-sick female, and sings her own wantonness; but all our women are chaste, and the maidens at their distaffs sing of divine things more nobly than that damsel of yours. Wherefore be ashamed, you who are professed disciples of women, yet scoff at those of the sex who hold our doctrine, as well as at the solemn assemblies they frequent' (p. 38). Theophilus, referring to the manifestation of God in the works of creation, adds: 'If thou perceivest these things, O man, living chastely, and holily, and righteously, thou canst see God. But before all let faith and the fear of God have rule in thy heart, and then shalt thou understand these things' (p. 78). He quotes largely, from Old Testament and New, the moral maxims which govern the christian life, as 'that whatever a man would not wish to be done to himself, he should not do to another' (p. 100); that we are 'not only not to sin in act, but not even in thought. . . . And the voice of the Gospel teaches still more urgently concerning chastity, saying, "Whosoever looketh on a woman who is not his own wife, to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." . . . And the Gospel says: "Love your enemies, and pray for them that despitefully use you. For if ye love them who love you, what reward have ye? This do also the robbers and the publicans." . . . Moreover, concerning subjection to authorities and powers, and prayer for them, the divine word gives us instructions, in order that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life. And it teaches us to render all things to all, honour to whom honour, fear to whom fear, tribute to whom tribute, to owe no man anything, but to love all' (p. 118, 119). He then repudiates the charges of unlawful intercourse and of cannibalism as not only false but incredible, especially as christians were forbidden so much as to witness shows of gladiators, because of their cruelty, or to attend the theatre, because of its impurity. The crimes charged against christians were habitually represented on the stage. 'But far be it from christians to conceive any such deeds; for

with them temperance dwells, self-restraint is practised, monogamy is observed, chastity is guarded, iniquity exterminated, sin extirpated, righteousness exercised, law administered, worship performed, God acknowledged: truth governs, grace guards, peace screens them; the holy word guides, wisdom teaches, life directs, God reigns.'

The books of the New Testament are occasionally quoted, usually from memory, or in a form adapted to the grammatical structure of the context:—as in some of the passages already given. Sometimes there is a direct reference to the inspiration of the writers. Thus Theophilus, having referred to God as having uttered his Logos for the purpose of creation, but without thereby emptying himself of Logos, remarks, 'Hence the holy writings teach us, and all the spirit-bearing men, one of whom, John, says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God," shewing that at first God was alone, and the Word in Him' (p. 88). In another passage the gospels are classed with the prophets. 'Concerning the righteousness which the law enjoined, confirmatory utterances are found both with the prophets and in the gospels, because they all spoke inspired by one Spirit of God' (p. 117). And shortly after, the first Epistle to Timothy is quoted as the divine word (p. 119), in a passage already given.

The fragment ascribed to Caius of Rome, usually referred to as the Muratorian Canon, may here be noticed, as probably dating from the third quarter of the second century. It indicates a more imperfect state of knowledge respecting the books entitled to a place in the New Testament than existed in the western church in the time of Irenæus. The text is in a somewhat unsatisfactory condition; and it is at best a clumsily executed translation into Latin from a Greek original. It would therefore be hazardous to place much reliance on it as historical evidence, if on any point it did not harmonize with what we know from other sources respecting the state of opinion in the latter half of the second century. Still, it is an interesting document; and its very crudeness is in favour of its high antiquity. The writer appears to have been a Roman, as we may infer from a passage in which he refers to the passion of Peter, and familiarly designates Rome as the city (p. 161). His Canon embraces the four Gospels, the Acts, thirteen Epistles of Paul, Jude, two Epistles of John, Wisdom, the Apocalypse of John, and one ascribed to Peter—the latter doubtfully, as some would not have it read in the Church. Perhaps there is some confusion between the Apocalypse of Peter and his Epistles, which are not otherwise mentioned, not even the first. There is no mention of the Epistle to the Hebrews, nor of the Epistle of James. The inclusion of the book of Wisdom in the Canon of the New Testament seems unaccountable, and may have originated in some mistake of the translator. The Pastor of

Hermas is pronounced worth reading, but excluded from the Canon—having been written ‘very recently in our times in the city of Rome, while his brother bishop Pius sat in the chair of the Church of Rome’ (p. 162).

IV. JUSTIN MARTYR.

Justin addressed his first Apology to Antoninus Pius before the middle of the second century (p. 46), and a second Apology to Marcus Aurelius, towards the end of his career, which was terminated by martyrdom A. D. 165. His dialogue with Trypho the Jew—the largest of his works—was written soon after the rebellion of Bar Cochba (p. 85), which was suppressed A. D. 135. Other pieces ascribed to him are of doubtful genuineness.

Justin, like other apologists, sets forth the christian belief in ‘the most true God, the Father of righteousness and temperance and the other virtues, who is free from all impurity. But both Him, and the Son who came forth from Him and taught us these things, and the host of other good angels who follow and are made like to Him, and the prophetic Spirit, we worship and adore’ (p. 11). He describes God as the Father and Creator of all (p. 12); and Christ as the Word who took shape and became man (p. 10). He teaches that we ought to worship God alone (p. 20); so that the angels must be understood in the extract just given as recipients of Christ’s teaching, and not objects of worship. In referring afterwards to the three Persons as objects of worship, he omits the angels (p. 16). He represents it as the great aim of christians to secure happiness in a future life. ‘Impelled by the desire of the eternal and pure life, we seek the abode that is with God’ (p. 12).

He thus describes the christian life: ‘We who formerly delighted in fornication now embrace chastity alone; we who formerly used magical arts dedicate ourselves to the good and unbegotten God; we who valued above all things the acquisition of wealth and possessions, now bring what we have into the common stock, and communicate to every one in need; we who hated and destroyed one another, and on account of their different manners would not live with men of a different tribe, now, since the coming of Christ, live familiarly with them, and pray for our enemies, and endeavour to persuade those who hate us unjustly to live conformably to the good precepts of Christ, to the end that they may become partakers with us of the same joyful hope of a reward from God the ruler of all’ (p. 17).

As to worship:—the Maker of the universe ‘has no need of streams of blood and libations and incense; whom we praise to the utmost of our power by the exercise of prayer and thanksgiving for all things wherewith we are supplied, as we have been taught that the only honour that is worthy of Him is not

of the Muratorian Canon. 'The presbyter said this. Mark having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately whatsoever he remembered. It was not, however, in exact order that he related the sayings or deeds of Christ. For he neither heard the Lord nor accompanied him. But afterwards, as I said, he accompanied Peter, who accommodated his instruction to the necessities [of his hearers], but with no intention of giving a regular narrative of the Lord's sayings. Wherefore Mark made no mistake in thus writing some things as he remembered them. For of one thing he took especial care, not to omit anything he had heard, and not to put anything fictitious into the statement.' [This is what is related by Papias regarding Mark; but with regard to Matthew he has made the following statements]: 'Matthew put together the oracles [of the Lord] in the Hebrew language, and each one interpreted them as best he could.' [The same person uses proofs from the First Epistle of John, and from the Epistle of Peter in like manner. And he also gives another story of a woman who was accused of many sins before the Lord, which is to be found in the Gospel according to the Hebrews]. (Apostolic Fathers, p. 446).

The Epistle to Diognetus is anonymous. It appears, from internal evidence, to belong to the first half of the second century. The writer speaks of christianity as this new kind or practice (of piety) which has only now entered into the world (p. 303), and describes himself as having been a disciple of the Apostles (p. 314).

In this Epistle the christian conception of God is set forth in contrast to the gods of paganism. 'God, the Lord and Fashioner of all things, who made all things, and assigned to them their several positions, proved himself not merely a friend to mankind, but also longsuffering (in His dealings with them). Yea, he was always of such a character, and still is, and will ever be, kind and good, and free from wrath, and true, and the only one who is (absolutely) good; and he formed in his mind a great and unspeakable conception, which he communicated to his Son alone' (p. 313). The Christology of the writer is equally explicit. 'God himself, who is almighty, the Creator of all things, and invisible, has sent from heaven, and placed among men, (Him who is) the Truth, and the holy and incomprehensible Word, and has firmly established Him in their hearts. He did not, as one might have imagined, send to men any servant, or angel, or ruler, or any one of those who bear sway over earthly things, or one of those to whom the government of things in the heavens has been entrusted, but the very Creator and Fashioner of all things—by whom he made the heavens—by whom he enclosed the sea within its proper bounds—whose ordinances all the stars faithfully observe—from whom the sun has received the measure of his daily course to be observed. . . . As a king sends his son, who is also a

Hermas is pronounced worth reading, but excluded from the Canon—having been written ‘very recently in our times in the city of Rome, while his brother bishop Pius sat in the chair of the Church of Rome’ (p. 162).

IV. JUSTIN MARTYR.

Justin addressed his first Apology to Antoninus Pius before the middle of the second century (p. 46), and a second Apology to Marcus Aurelius, towards the end of his career, which was terminated by martyrdom A. D. 165. His dialogue with Trypho the Jew—the largest of his works—was written soon after the rebellion of Bar Cochba (p. 85), which was suppressed A. D. 135. Other pieces ascribed to him are of doubtful genuineness.

Justin, like other apologists, sets forth the christian belief in ‘the most true God, the Father of righteousness and temperance and the other virtues, who is free from all impurity. But both Him, and the Son who came forth from Him and taught us these things, and the host of other good angels who follow and are made like to Him, and the prophetic Spirit, we worship and adore’ (p. 11). He describes God as the Father and Creator of all (p. 12); and Christ as the Word who took shape and became man (p. 10). He teaches that we ought to worship God alone (p. 20); so that the angels must be understood in the extract just given as recipients of Christ’s teaching, and not objects of worship. In referring afterwards to the three Persons as objects of worship, he omits the angels (p. 16). He represents it as the great aim of christians to secure happiness in a future life. ‘Impelled by the desire of the eternal and pure life, we seek the abode that is with God (p. 12).

He thus describes the christian life: ‘We who formerly delighted in fornication now embrace chastity alone; we who formerly used magical arts dedicate ourselves to the good and unbegotten God; we who valued above all things the acquisition of wealth and possessions, now bring what we have into the common stock, and communicate to every one in need; we who hated and destroyed one another, and on account of their different manners would not live with men of a different tribe, now, since the coming of Christ, live familiarly with them, and pray for our enemies, and endeavour to persuade those who hate us unjustly to live conformably to the good precepts of Christ, to the end that they may become partakers with us of the same joyful hope of a reward from God the ruler of all’ (p. 17).

As to worship:—the Maker of the universe ‘has no need of streams of blood and libations and incense; whom we praise to the utmost of our power by the exercise of prayer and thanksgiving for all things wherewith we are supplied, as we have been taught that the only honour that is worthy of Him is not

of the Muratorian Canon. 'The presbyter said this. Mark having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately whatsoever he remembered. It was not, however, in exact order that he related the sayings or deeds of Christ. For he neither heard the Lord nor accompanied him. But afterwards, as I said, he accompanied Peter, who accommodated his instruction to the necessities [of his hearers], but with no intention of giving a regular narrative of the Lord's sayings. Wherefore Mark made no mistake in thus writing some things as he remembered them. For of one thing he took especial care, not to omit anything he had heard, and not to put anything fictitious into the statement.' [This is what is related by Papias regarding Mark; but with regard to Matthew he has made the following statements]: 'Matthew put together the oracles [of the Lord] in the Hebrew language, and each one interpreted them as best he could.' [The same person uses proofs from the First Epistle of John, and from the Epistle of Peter in like manner. And he also gives another story of a woman who was accused of many sins before the Lord, which is to be found in the Gospel according to the Hebrews]. (Apostolic Fathers, p. 446).

The Epistle to Diognetus is anonymous. It appears, from internal evidence, to belong to the first half of the second century. The writer speaks of christianity as this new kind or practice (of piety) which has only now entered into the world (p. 303), and describes himself as having been a disciple of the Apostles (p. 314).

In this Epistle the christian conception of God is set forth in contrast to the gods of paganism. 'God, the Lord and Fashioner of all things, who made all things, and assigned to them their several positions, proved himself not merely a friend to mankind, but also longsuffering (in His dealings with them). Yea, he was always of such a character, and still is, and will ever be, kind and good, and free from wrath, and true, and the only one who is (absolutely) good; and he formed in his mind a great and unspeakable conception, which he communicated to his Son alone' (p. 313). The Christology of the writer is equally explicit. 'God himself, who is almighty, the Creator of all things, and invisible, has sent from heaven, and placed among men, (Him who is) the Truth, and the holy and incomprehensible Word, and has firmly established Him in their hearts. He did not, as one might have imagined, send to men any servant, or angel, or ruler, or any one of those who bear sway over earthly things, or one of those to whom the government of things in the heavens has been entrusted, but the very Creator and Fashioner of all things—by whom he made the heavens—by whom he enclosed the sea within its proper bounds—whose ordinances all the stars faithfully observe—from whom the sun has received the measure of his daily course to be observed. . . . As a king sends his son, who is also a

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The christian life is thus depicted:—'They dwell in their own countries, but simply as sojourners. As citizens, they share in all things with others, and yet endure all things as if foreigners. Every foreign land is to them as their native country, and every land of their birth as a land of strangers. They marry, as do all (others); they beget children; but they do not destroy their offspring. They have a common table, but not a common bed. They are in the flesh, but they do not live after the flesh. The pass their days on earth, but they are citizens of heaven. They obey the prescribed laws, and at the same time surpass the laws by their lives. They love all men, and are persecuted by all. They are unknown and condemned; they are put to death and restored to life. They are poor, yet make many rich; they are in lack of all things, and yet abound in all; they are dishonoured, and yet in their very dishonour are glorified. They are evil spoken of, and yet are justified; they are reviled, and bless; they are insulted, and repay the insult with honour; they do good, yet are punished as evil-doers' (p. 307). 'How will you love Him who has first so loved you? And if you love Him, you will be an imitator of His kindness. . . . He who takes upon himself the burden

Graces, viz., Faith, Self-restraint, Simplicity, Guilelessness, Chastity, Intelligence and Love. 'Whoever devotes himself to these, and is able to hold fast by their works, shall have his dwelling in the tower with the Saints of God' (p. 340). In a similar vision in the third book the stones used in building the tower are carried through the gate already mentioned by twelve virgins, whose names are Faith, Continence, Power, Patience; Simplicity, Innocence, Purity, Cheerfulness, Truth, Understanding, Harmony and Love. 'These virgins are the powers of the Son of God. If you bear His name but possess not His power, it will be in vain that you bear His name. . . Every one who bears the name of the Son of God, ought to bear the names also of these; for the Son himself bears the names of these virgins. As many stones as you saw come into the building of the tower through the hands of these virgins, and remaining, have been clothed with their strength. For this reason you see that the tower became of one stone with the rock. So also they who have believed in God through His Son, and are clothed with these spirits, shall become one spirit, one body, and the colour of their garments shall be one. And the dwelling of such as bear the names of the virgins is in the tower. 'He who bears these names and that of the Son of God will be able to enter into the kingdom of God' (p. 416-9). On the subject of second marriages Hermas takes different ground from that afterwards maintained by Tertullian and the Montanists. 'There is no sin in marrying again; but if they remain unmarried, they gain greater honour and glory from the Lord; but if they marry they do not sin' (p. 355).

Commandment ninth is an exhortation to pray without doubting. Faith is from above, and has great power. Ask of the Lord without doubting, and you will know the multitude of his tender mercies (p. 363-4). The following passage relates to the observance of public worship:—'When a man having the Divine Spirit comes into an assembly of righteous men who have faith in the Divine Spirit, and this assembly of men offers up prayer to God, then the angel of the prophetic Spirit, who is destined for him, fills the man; and the man being filled with the Holy Spirit, speaks to the multitude as the Lord wishes (p. 368). Prominence is given to the ordinance of Baptism. 'Hear why the tower is built upon the waters. It is because your life has been, and will be, saved through water' (p. 335). 'Do you wish to know who are the other (stones) which fell near the waters, but could not be rolled into them? These are they who have heard the Word, and wish to be baptized in the name of the Lord; but when the chastity demanded by the truth comes into their recollection, they draw back, and again walk after their own wicked desires' (p. 338-9). So closely is baptism associated in his mind with forgiveness that he submits a question to the Shepherd respecting the teaching of those who

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'maintain that there is no other repentance than that which takes place, when we descended into the water and received remission of our former sins' (p. 354). The answer is carefully guarded. He who has received remission of his sins ought not to sin any more. If he sins, he has opportunity to repent but once. A still more striking development of the idea that baptism is the sacrament of remission will be found in the position that it was administered by the Apostles and their fellow-labourers to the Old Testament saints in Hades. The righteous men of former generations were represented in the vision by certain stones ascending out of a pit, to be applied to the building of the tower. 'They were obliged to ascend through water in order that they might be made alive. . . . Accordingly, those also who fell asleep received the seal of the Son of God. . . . The soul, then, is the water : they descend into the water dead, and they arise alive. And to them, accordingly, was this seal preached, and they made use of it that they might enter into the kingdom of God. . . . The Apostles and teachers who preached the name of the Son of God, after falling asleep in the power and faith of the Son of God, preached it not only to those who were asleep, but themselves also gave them the seal of the preaching. Accordingly they descended with them into the water, and again ascended' (p. 420).

Hermas does not formally quote the Scriptures of the New Testament. But there is a general allusion to them as the word of the Lord (p. 415). And expressions occur which are evidently derived from the New Testament. 'Those that love the first seats' (p. 341) may be referred to Mat. xxiii. 6; Luke xi. 43; xx. 46. His mighty beast with fiery locusts proceeding out of its mouth (p. 345) reminds us of the dragon of the Apocalypse, and the locusts that came out of the smoke of the bottomless pit (Rev. ix. 3). 'Better were it for them not to have been born' (p. 346) is an echo of Mat. xxvi. 24. 'If he put his wife away and marry another, he also commits adultery' (p. 353), is a misapplication of Mat. v. 32; xix. 9. 'Fear Him who has all power, both to save and destroy' (p. 374), is taken freely from Mat. x. 28; Luke xii. 5. The expression 'to save and destroy' is from James 4. 12—a passage that was evidently in the mind of Hermas when shewing how unreasonable it is for man to be vindictive, when God is merciful to the penitent (p. 425).

VII. BARNABAS.

The Epistle of Barnabas is quoted seven times by Clement of Alexandria, and ascribed without hesitation to the fellow-labourer of the Apostle Paul. From this we may fairly infer that it had been in circulation for a considerable time—say at least half a century—before the time of Clement. Its contents

are unworthy of Barnabas ; but it is an interesting document, as exhibiting the earliest form of the christian *gnosis* which was cultivated specially at Alexandria. It is of later date than the destruction of Jerusalem, as it refers (p. 129) to that event: how much later, we have no means of determining. We may safely assign it to a date at least as early as the Shepherd of Hermas. His disapproval of a solitary life (p. 107) indicates that the pristine simplicity of the Christian faith had not yet been corrupted in favour of a rigid asceticism.

The Father consulted the Son in creating man. 'The Scripture says concerning us, while he speaks to the Son, Let us make man after our image. . . . These things were spoken to the Son' (p. 111). It was the Son of God who suffered for us. 'If the Son of God, who is Lord [of all things], and who will judge the living and the dead, suffered, that his stroke might give us life, let us believe that the Son of God could not have suffered except for our sakes (p. 112). His work was foretold by the prophets. 'If the Lord endured to suffer for our soul, he being Lord of all the world, . . . understand how it was that he endured to suffer at the hands of men. The prophets, having obtained grace from him, prophesied concerning him. And He (since it behoved him to appear in flesh), that he might abolish death, and reveal the resurrection from the dead, endured [what and as he did], in order that he might fulfil the promise made unto the fathers, and by preparing a new people for himself, might shew, while he dwelt on earth, that He, when he has raised mankind, will also judge them. Moreover, teaching Israel, and doing so great miracles and signs, He preached the truth to him, and greatly loved him. But when he chose his own Apostles who were to preach his gospel, [He did so from among those] who were sinners above all sin, that he might show he came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Then he manifested himself to be the Son of God. For if he had not come in the flesh, how could men have been saved by beholding him? Since looking upon the sun, which is to cease to exist, and is the work of his hands, their eyes are not able to bear his rays (p. 108). The way in which men act in this life determines their future destiny. 'It is well that he who has learned the judgments of the Lord, as many as have been written, should walk in them. For he who keepeth these shall be glorified in the kingdom of God; but he who chooseth other things shall be destroyed with his works. On this account there will be a resurrection, on this account a retribution. I beseech you who are superiors, if you will receive any counsel of my good-will, have among yourselves those to whom you may show kindness: do not forsake them. For the day is at hand on which all things shall perish with the evil [one]. The Lord is near, and his reward (p. 134). Barnabas sets forth in detail the maxims which regulate the christian life. The way

of light is as follows. 'If any one desires to travel to the appointed place, he must be zealous in his works. . . Thou shalt love Him that created thee : thou shalt glorify Him that redeemed thee from death. . . Thou shalt be meek : thou shalt be peaceable. . . Thou shalt not be mindful of evil against thy brother. . . Thou shalt love thy neighbour more than [or as] thine own soul. . . Thou shalt not issue orders with bitterness to thy maid-servant or thy man-servant, who trust in the same [God]. . . Thou shalt communicate in all things with thy neighbour ; thou shalt not call things thine own ; for if ye are partakers in common of things which are incorruptible, how much more [should you be] of those things which are corruptible ! . . Thou shalt love, as the apple of thine eye, every one that speaketh to thee the word of the Lord. Thou shalt remember the day of judgment night and day' (p. 131-3).

Baptism was foreshadowed in the Old Testament. 'Concerning the water, indeed, it is written, in reference to the Israelites, that they should not receive that baptism which leads to the remission of sins, but should procure another for themselves. . . What saith he in reference to the Son ? "His water is sure." . . And again, . . The man who doeth these things shall be like a tree planted by the courses of waters' (p. 120-1). The Lord's Day commemorates the resurrection of Christ. 'He says to them, "Your new moons and your Sabbaths I cannot endure." Ye perceive how he speaks : your present Sabbaths are not acceptable to me, but that is which I have made, [namely this,] when, giving rest to all things, I shall make a beginning of the eighth day, that is, a beginning of another world. Wherefore, also, we keep the eighth day with joyfulness, the day also on which Jesus rose from the dead. And when he had manifested himself, he ascended into the heavens' (p. 128). Prophecy is one of the gifts of the church. 'Having received the forgiveness of sins, and placed our trust in the name of the Lord, we have become new creatures, formed again from the beginning. Wherefore in our habitation God truly dwells in us. How ? His word of faith ; his calling of promise ; the wisdom of the statutes ; the commands of the doctrine ; he himself prophecying in us ; he himself dwelling in us ; opening to us who were enslaved by death the doors of the temple, that is, the mouth. . . He, then, who wishes to be saved, looks not to man, but to Him who dwelleth in him, and speaketh in him' (p. 130).

Barnabas quotes the New Testament with the formula, *as it is written*. 'Let us beware lest we be found [fulfilling that saying], as it is written, "Many are called, but few are chosen"' (p. 107 : Mat. xx. 16 ; xxii. 14). The same formula is used immediately after, in quoting from Isaiah. The saying referred

to was taken from a book, and a book equally sacred and authoritative with the Scriptures of the Old Testament.

In various passages we find evidence of the use of the New Testament. Thus: 'The Lord will judge the world without respect of persons (1 Pet. i. 16). Each will receive as he has done; if he is righteous, his righteousness will precede him; if he is wicked, the reward of wickedness is before him' (p. 107; 1 Tim. v. 24, 25). 'When he chose his own Apostles who were to preach his gospel, [he did so from among those] who were sinners above all sin, that he might shew he came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance' (p. 108; Mat. ix. 13; Mark ii. 17; Luke v. 32). The single case of Matthew the publican formed but a narrow basis for so sweeping an assertion; but the quotation is obvious. 'He has created us anew by his Spirit' (p. 111; Eph. iv. 24). 'Having received the forgiveness of sins, and placed our trust in the name of the Lord, we have become new creatures, formed again from the beginning' (p. 130; 2 Cor. v. 17; Gal. vi. 15). 'We have been refashioned . . . because He was to be manifested in flesh, and sojourn among us (John i. 14). For, my brethren, the habitation of our heart is a holy temple to the Lord' (p. 111; Eph. ii. 20). 'When fixed to the cross, he had given him to drink vinegar and gall' (p. 112; Mat. xxvii. 34). 'Why [do you behold—with allusion to the scape-goat] the one that is accursed crowned? Because they shall see Him then in that day having a scarlet robe about his body down to his feet; and they shall say, Is not this he whom we once despised, and pierced, and mocked, and crucified? (p. 114). The garment down to his feet is suggestive of Rev. i. 13. 'Thus also, says He, Those who wish to behold me, and lay hold of my kingdom, must through tribulation and suffering obtain me' (p. 114; Acts xiv. 22). 'Thou shalt not hesitate to give, nor murmur when thou givest. Give to every one that asketh thee, and thou shalt know who is the good Recompenser of the reward' (p. 133; Mat. v. 42; Luke vi. 30).

VIII. POLYCARP.

Polycarp was a disciple of the Apostles, and instructor of Irenaeus. Addressing Florinus, who had lapsed to Valentinianism, Irenaeus says, 'These opinions, those presbyters who preceded us, and who were conversant with the Apostles, did not hand down to thee. For, while I was yet a boy, I saw thee in Lower Asia with Polycarp, distinguishing thyself in the royal court, and endeavouring to gain his approbation. For I have a more vivid recollection of what occurred at that time than of recent events; . . . so that I can even describe the place where the blessed Polycarp used to sit and discourse—his going out, too, and his coming in—his general mode of life and

personal appearance, together with the discourses which he delivered to the people; also how he would speak of his familiar intercourse with John, and with the rest of those who had seen the Lord; and how he would call their words to remembrance. Whatsoever things he had heard from them respecting the Lord, both with regard to his miracles and his teaching, Polycarp having thus received from the eye-witnesses of the Word of Life, would recount them all in harmony with the Scriptures (vol. ii. p. 158-9). Again, in his work against heresies, he writes: 'Polycarp was not only instructed by Apostles, and conversed with many who had seen Christ, but was also, by Apostles in Asia, appointed bishop of the Church in Smyrna, whom I also saw in my early youth, for he tarried [on earth] a very long time; and, when a very old man, gloriously and most nobly suffering martyrdom, departed this life, having always taught the things which he had learned from the Apostles, and which the church has handed down, and which alone are true. . . Polycarp replied to Marcion, who met him on one occasion, and said, "Dost thou know me?" "I do know thee, the first-born of Satan." . . There is also a very powerful epistle of Polycarp written to the Philippians, from which those who choose to do so, and are anxious about their salvation, can learn the character of his faith, and the preaching of the truth' (vol. i. p. 262-4). The date of his martyrdom is not clearly ascertained. Some place it as early as A. D. 147; others as late as A. D. 167, or even later. He had served Christ, according to his own statement, for eighty-six years, so that if he died in A. D. 167 his christian life must have begun in A. D. 81, and his natural life probably some years earlier. His Epistle may have been written half a century before his death. If the thirteenth chapter is a genuine part of it, the date is A. D. 107, or immediately after the martyrdom of Ignatius. Its teaching is that which he had received, from the Apostle John and other christian instructors, during the last twenty years of the first century. In favour of the genuineness of the thirteenth chapter we may remark that the martyrdom of Ignatius is expressly referred to in the ninth chapter, and that the commendation of the Philippians, in the first chapter, for having accompanied those who were bound in chains, is best understood as referring to the sympathy and christian kindness they had exercised towards Ignatius on his journey to Rome.

The creed of Polycarp is sufficiently indicated by the benediction with which the Epistle opens. 'Mercy to you and peace from God almighty, and from the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour, be multiplied' (p. 69). A similar invocation occurs towards the close. 'May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ himself, who is the Son of God, and our everlasting high priest, build you up in faith and truth, and in all meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, for-

bearance and purity' (p. 76). He strenuously affirms the reality of the incarnation. 'Whosoever does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, is antichrist; and whosoever does not confess the testimony of the cross, is of the devil; and whosoever perverts the oracles of the Lord to his own lusts, and says that there is neither a resurrection nor a judgment, he is the first-born of Satan' (p. 73). He refers in various passages to the atoning death and the resurrection of Christ,—'who for our sins suffered even unto death, [but] whom God raised from the dead, having loosed the bands of the grave' (p. 69). He 'bore our sins in his own body on the tree; did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; but endured all things for us, that we might live in Him. Let us then be imitators of his patience; and if we suffer for his name's sake, let us glorify him.' The martyrs 'loved not this present world, but Him who died for us, and for our sakes was raised again by God from the dead' (p. 74). He gives prominence to the expectation of a future life. To Christ, as exalted to a throne at God's right hand, 'all things in heaven and on earth are subject. Him every spirit serves. He comes as the judge of the living and the dead. His blood will God require of those that do not believe in him. But He who has raised him up from the dead will raise up us also, if we do his will, and walk in his commandments, and love what he loved' (p. 70). 'May he bestow on you a lot and portion among his saints, and on us with you, and on all that are under heaven who shall believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, and in his Father, who raised him from the dead' (p. 76).

A large part of the Epistle is occupied in urging the duties of practical religion. We are to do the will of God, 'keeping ourselves from all unrighteousness, covetousness, love of money, evil-speaking, false witness; not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, or blow for blow, or cursing for cursing, but being mindful of what the Lord said in his teaching: "Judge not, that ye be not judged: forgive, and it shall be forgiven unto you; be merciful, that ye may obtain mercy; with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again"' (p. 70). He exhibits the gentleness of the christian temper in his remarks on the case of Valens, a Philippian presbyter who had flagrantly disgraced his office, by adultery, as it would seem, and falsehood. Whilst strongly reprobating the offence, he exhorts the Church to aim at the repentance and recovery of the offenders (p. 75).

Polycarp is no philosophical theologian, but a simple-minded believer of the gospel. His Epistle is saturated throughout with the thoughts and language of the New Testament. That he placed the New on the same level of divine authority with the Old Testament is obvious not merely from his constant use of it but especially from the following passage in which the

two are combined. 'I trust that ye are well versed in the sacred Scriptures. . . It is declared, then, in these Scriptures, "Be ye angry, and sin not," and, "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath" (Eph. iv. 26). Happy is he who remembers this, which I believe to be the case with you' (p. 76). Accordingly he disclaims all idea of comparing himself with the Apostle Paul, or any epistle he could write with that which Paul had written to the Philippian church (p. 71). He quotes most frequently from 1 Peter, and, next to that, from the Sermon on the Mount. Though a disciple of John, he makes considerable use of the Pauline Epistles.

IX. PLINY.

Pliny the younger was for a short time Governor of Pontus and Bithynia, and in that capacity had occasion to consult the Emperor Trajan as to the manner in which christians were to be treated. His letter on this subject was probably written in the same year (A. D. 107) as the letters of Ignatius and Polycarp. The following is Lardner's translation of it.

'Pliny to the Emperor Trajan wisheth health and happiness. It is my constant custom, sir, to refer myself to you in all matters concerning which I have any doubt. For who can better direct me when I hesitate, or instruct me when I am ignorant? I have never been present at any trials of christians: so that I know not well what is the subject matter of punishment or of inquiry, or what strictness ought to be used in either. Nor have I been a little perplexed to determine whether any difference ought to be made on account of age, or whether the young and tender, and the full grown and robust, ought to be treated all alike: whether repentance should entitle to pardon, or whether all who have once been christians ought to be punished, though they are now no longer so: whether the name itself, although no crime be detected, or crimes only belonging to the name ought to be punished. Concerning all these things I am in doubt. In the meantime I have taken this course with all who have been brought before me and have been accused as christians. I have put the question to them, whether they were christians. Upon their confessing to me that they were, I repeated the question a second and a third time, threatening also to punish them with death. Such as still persisted, I ordered away to be punished; for it was no doubt with me, whatever might be the nature of their opinion, that contumacy, and inflexible obstinacy, ought to be punished. There were others of the same infatuation, whom, because they are Roman citizens, I have noted down to be sent to the city. In a short time, the crime spreading itself, even whilst under persecution, as is usual in such cases, diverse sorts of persons came in my way. An information was presented to me without

mentioning the author, containing the names of many persons, who upon examination denied that they were christians, or had ever been so : who repeated after me an invocation of the gods, and with wine and frankincense made supplication to your image, which for that purpose I have caused to be brought and set before them, together with the statues of the deities. Moreover, they reviled the name of Christ. None of which things, as is said, they who are really christians can by any means be compelled to do. These therefore I thought proper to discharge. Others were named by an informer, who at first confessed themselves christians, and afterwards denied it. The rest said they had been christians, but had left them ; some three years ago, some longer, and one or more above twenty years. They all worshipped your image, and the statues of the gods ; these also reviled Christ. They affirmed that the whole of their fault or error lay in this, that they were wont to meet together on a stated day before it was light, and sing among themselves alternately a hymn to Christ as a God, and bind themselves by an oath, not to the commission of any wickedness, but not to be guilty of theft or robbery or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor to deny a pledge committed to them, when called upon to return it. When these things were performed, it was their custom to separate, and then to come together again to a meal, which they ate in common, without any disorder : but this they had forborne since the publication of my edict, by which, according to your commands, I prohibited assemblies. After receiving this account I judged it the more necessary to examine, and that by torture, two maid-servants, which were called ministers. But I have discovered nothing, beside a bad and excessive superstition. Suspending therefore all judicial proceedings, I have recourse to you for advice ; for it has appeared unto me a matter highly deserving consideration, especially on account of the great number of persons who are in danger of suffering. For many of all ages, and every rank, of both sexes likewise, are accused, and will be accused. Nor has the contagion of this superstition seized cities only, but the lesser towns also, and the open country. Nevertheless it seems to me that it may be restrained and corrected. It is certain that the temples, which were almost forsaken, begin to be more frequented. And the sacred solemnities, after a long intermission, are revived. Victims likewise are everywhere bought up, whereas for some time there were few purchasers. Whence it is easy to imagine what numbers of men might be reclaimed, if pardon were granted to those who shall repent.' Trajan replied that he had done right. Those who were convicted of being christians, and refused to sacrifice to the gods, were to be punished. But christians were not to be sought for ; and an anonymous complaint against them was not to be entertained. This rescript of Trajan seems to have possessed the force of law,

not only in Bithynia but throughout the empire, for a considerable length of time. Under it christians might be left in peace so long as no one chose to prosecute them; but they were continually at the mercy of their enemies, who could lodge an information against them at any time.

Pliny's account of christianity, its creed, life and worship, closely corresponds with the fuller description afterwards given by Justin Martyr. It was in loyalty to the one living and true God that christians refused to sacrifice to idols. They were Monotheists; and hence their singing hymns to Christ as to a god possessed a deeper significance than the language would convey in the case of a heathen. They honoured Christ as a divine person, mysteriously one with the supreme God. That they valued his approval, and the future blessedness they hoped to share with him, more than life itself, was no doubt an excessive superstition in the estimation of Pliny. But the morality to which they bound themselves by weekly participation of the sacrament of the Supper—their honesty, chastity, truthfulness, and faithfulness in keeping a trust, ought to have commanded his respect. Their time of meeting—before the dawn of Sunday—must have been a special arrangement necessitated by persecution. There was least risk of disturbance at an hour when their enemies were sound asleep. Otherwise the description of their weekly worship closely corresponds with that of Justin. By discontinuing the love-feast, and providing in a more private way for the necessities of the poor, they shewed their desire to avoid giving unnecessary offence to their rulers. But on two points they were obstinate. They would not countenance the pagan worship; and they met secretly, since they were not allowed to do so in public, for a purer worship of their own.

X. IGNATIUS.

Ignatius was bishop of Antioch—the second Mother-Church of christendom—during the persecutions under Domitian. He governed the church with great care and unflagging zeal in those troublous times. When persecution ceased for a time, he felt grieved that he had not attained to the honour of martyrdom. Under Trajan he obtained his desire. There are some difficulties in the way of accepting the ancient account of his martyrdom as a contemporaneous narrative, as it purports to be, by companions in travel who witnessed his death. But there can be no doubt that he was condemned in Antioch and sent to Rome to be thrown to wild beasts in the amphitheatre. The date usually assigned to his martyrdom is A. D. 107, though some make it nine years later. His letters were written on his journey to Rome. The earliest mention of them is by Polycarp, near the close of his Epistle to the Philippians. Assuming the

correctness of the Greek text of this passage, as preserved by Eusebius, we learn from it that he had epistles addressed to himself or his church, and copies of some others. Those that were properly his own are usually supposed to have been one to himself and one to the church of Smyrna. It is possible, however, that there may have been a second addressed to himself, accompanying a letter from the Philippian Church to that in Antioch, to be forwarded by him when he might find an opportunity. For the request to forward letters from Philippi to Antioch mentioned by Polycarp is not found in the extant epistle of Ignatius to Polycarp, in any of its forms. The Syriac recension speaks of a person to be sent to Antioch in the place of Ignatius, in accordance with instructions which Polycarp had previously received from him. The Greek text, in both its forms, has nothing to say of a successor, but proposes that Polycarp should send a messenger to Antioch to congratulate the church on the cessation of the persecution, and also write to all the churches round to do the same :—a rather senseless proposal, especially as the peace enjoyed was not likely to prove more than a temporary lull. If the extant epistle to Polycarp has not been mutilated, there must have been another which has not come down to us. As to the other epistles in the collection of Polycarp, that to the Ephesians would be one of them ; but it is doubtful whether he could have possessed a copy of that to the Romans. It is said indeed to have been written from Smyrna. But it is more likely to have been called forth by positive information that the Roman Christians were about to use influence on his behalf ; and he could not well receive information of that kind till he approached the end of his journey, as he had been sent on with all convenient speed. The allusion of Polycarp to the number of letters in his possession thus warrants the inference that he had two or more that are not embraced in the Syriac collection.

On the Ignatian controversy we do not enter. It will suffice for our present purpose if the shortest of the three recensions— that represented by the Syriac version of three epistles—be accepted as in the main a genuine relic of the martyr of Antioch.

Christ is God incarnate. 'Look for him that is above the times, Him who has no times, Him who is invisible, Him who for our sakes became visible, Him who is impalpable, Him who is impassible, Him who for our sakes suffered, Him who endured everything in every form for our sakes' (p. 275). The church of Ephesus is described as having been 'chosen in the purpose of truth by the will of the Father of Jesus Christ our God.' 'Ye are fervent in the blood of God' (p. 277). He is sustained in the prospect of martyrdom by the hope of a glorious future. 'It is good that I should set (going westward, like the sun, to die at Rome) from the world in God, that I may rise in Him to life' (p. 282). The letters are full of exhorta-

tions to the practice of piety. The following passage may serve as a specimen. 'Pray for all men. . . By your works especially let them be instructed. Against their harsh words be ye conciliatory, by meekness of mind and gentleness. . . Against their fierceness be ye peaceful and quiet, and be ye not astounded by them. Let us, then, be imitators of our Lord in meekness, and strive who shall more especially be injured and oppressed and defrauded' (p. 279).

As to the usages of public worship: he exhorts Polycarp, 'Let there be frequent assemblies: ask every man [to them] by his name' (p. 275). 'Let your baptism be to you as armour, and faith as a spear, and love as a helmet, and patience as a panoply' (p. 276). 'I seek the bread of God, which is the flesh of Jesus Christ: and I seek his blood, a drink which is love incorruptible' (p. 284).

As if deprecating any comparison of his Epistles with those of the Apostles, he says to the Romans, 'I do not, like Peter and Paul, issue orders unto you. They are Apostles, but I am one condemned; they indeed are free, but I am a slave, even until now' (p. 283). Though he seldom uses the exact language of the New Testament, the traces of his familiarity with it are sufficiently distinct. 'Be steadfast in prayer' (p. 273; Col. iv. 2, Syr.). Be wise as the serpent in everything, and innocent, with respect to those things which are requisite, even as the dove (p. 274; Mat. x. 16). 'Those who seem to be somewhat' (p. 274; Gal. ii. 6; vi. 3). 'Charge my brethren in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they love their wives as our Lord his Church' (Eph. v. 25-29). 'Let everything be [done] for the honour of God' (p. 276; 1 Cor. x. 31). 'Ye are imitators of God' (p. 277; Eph. v. 1). 'Ye are prepared for the building of God the Father (1 Pet. ii. 5), and ye are raised up on high by the instrument of Jesus Christ, which is the Cross (John xii. 32); and ye are drawn by the rope, which is the Holy Spirit; and your pulley is your faith, and your love is the way which leadeth up on high to God' (p. 278). 'My spirit bows in adoration to the cross, which is a stumbling-block to those who do not believe (1 Cor. i. 18, 23), but is to you for salvation and eternal life' (p. 279). 'From Syria, and even unto Rome, I am cast among wild beasts (1 Cor. xv. 32), . . . I, however, am the rather instructed by their injurious treatment; but not on this account am I justified to myself' (p. 283; 1 Cor. iv. 4). 'The pains of the birth stand over against me (p. 284; John xvi. 21); and my love is crucified (Gal. vi. 14). . . I seek the bread of God, which is the flesh of Jesus Christ' (John vi. 51).

XI. CLEMENT OF ROME.

The Epistle to the Corinthians was written in the name of the Roman Church, after sudden and successive calamities (p. 7), probably brought on the Church by persecution. Mention is made of the martyrdom not only of Peter and Paul, but also of a great multitude of the elect, including women as well as men (p. 11). Clement makes no reference to himself in the body of the Epistle; but there is no reason to doubt that he was the writer. In attempting to fix the date we have a choice between two points of time—the close of the Neronian persecution, or of that under Domitian—about A. D. 68 or about A. D. 97. Several things favour the earlier date. The martyrdoms of Peter and Paul are spoken of as recent—‘in our own generation’ (p. 10). The various sacrifices of the Mosaic ritual are described as being offered in Jerusalem (p. 36). It is true that usages now obsolete might be described, in a dramatic style, by verbs in the present tense; but the natural impression conveyed by the passage is that Jerusalem had not yet been destroyed. In the language of Clement, as in the New Testament, bishop and presbyter are convertible terms (pp. 37, 39, 41). With Ignatius it is otherwise: the bishop is as distinct from the presbyter as the presbyter from the deacon; and we can scarcely suppose that the change thus indicated, both in the organization of the Church and in the meaning attached by usage to the word bishop, could have been silently effected in so short a period as ten years. Or, more, the absence of the Logos doctrine points to the same conclusion. The combination of diversity with unity exemplified in the relation of Word to him who speaks it, furnished the fathers of the second century with their favourite explanation of the way in which the Son stands related to the Father. The absence of all trace of it may be held as indicating that Clement’s Epistle was written at an earlier date than the Gospel of John. But this is far from certain. Clement’s doctrinal allusions are only incidental; he may have been no Platonist; and one or two passages are suggestive, at least, of an origin in John’s writings. It appears that Hegesippus assigned the division in the Church of Corinth to the last five years of the reign of Domitian.

Christ is God: ‘Content with the provision which God had made for you, and carefully attending to his words, ye were inwardly filled with his doctrine, and his sufferings were before your eyes’ (p. 8: compare Acts xx. 28). ‘Our Lord Jesus Christ, the sceptre of the majesty of God, did not come in the pomp and pride of arrogance, although he might have done so, but in a lowly condition’ (p. 18). ‘Concerning his Son the Lord spoke thus: Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee’ (p. 33). It was he that taught in the Old Testament: ‘He himself by the Holy Ghost has addressed us: Come, ye

children, hearken unto me, &c.' (p. 23). 'On account of the love he bore us, Jesus Christ our Lord gave his blood for us by the will of God; his flesh for our flesh, and his soul for our souls' (p. 43). 'Let us look steadfastly to the blood of Christ, and see how precious that blood is to God, which, having been shed for our salvation, has set the grace of repentance before the whole world' (p. 12). All-raing to the scarlet thread by which Rahab's house was to be distinguished, Clement remarks: 'Thus they [the spies] made it manifest that redemption should flow through the blood of the Lord to all them that believe and hope in God' (p. 16). 'Let us reverence the Lord Jesus Christ, whose blood was given for us' (p. 23). He is 'the High Priest of all our offerings, the defender and helper of our infirmity. By him we look up to the heights of heaven. By him we behold, as in a glass, His [God's] immaculate and most excellent visage' (p. 33). He rose from the dead. 'Let us consider, beloved, how the Lord continually proves to us that there shall be a future resurrection, of which he has rendered the Lord Jesus Christ the first fruits by raising him from the dead' (p. 25). Speaking of the Apostles, he says: 'Having received their orders, and being fully assured by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and established in the word of God, with full assurance of the Holy Ghost, they went forth proclaiming that the kingdom of God was at hand' (p. 37). There is a future life of blessedness awaiting those who fear God. 'All the generations from Adam even unto this day have passed away; but those who, through the grace of God, have been made perfect in love, now possess a place among the godly, and shall be made manifest at the revelation of the kingdom of Christ. For it is written, 'Enter into thy secret chambers for a little while, until my wrath and fury pass away; and I will remember a propitious day, and will raise you out of your graves' (p. 43).

The practical tone of the Epistle may be judged of from the following extracts: 'Let him who has love in Christ keep the commandments of Christ. Who can describe the [blessed] bond of the love of God? What man is able to tell the excellence of its beauty, as it ought to be told? The height to which love exalts is unspeakable. Love unites us to God. Love covers a multitude of sins. Love beareth all things, is long-suffering in all things. There is nothing base, nothing arrogant in love. Love admits of no schisms: love gives rise to no seditions: love does all things in harmony. By love have all the elect of God been made perfect; without love nothing is well-pleasing to God' (p. 42). 'We know many among ourselves who have given themselves up to bonds, in order that they might ransom others. Many, too, have surrendered themselves to slavery, that with the price which they received for themselves they might provide food for others' (p. 46). 'Ye were all dis-

tinguished by humility, and were in no respect puffed up with pride, but yielded obedience rather than extorted it, and were more willing to give than to receive' (p. 8). 'Let the wise man display his wisdom, not by [mere] words, but through good deeds. Let the humble not bear testimony to himself, but leave witness to be borne to him by another. Let him that is pure in the flesh not grow proud of it and boast, knowing that it was another who bestowed on him the gift of continence' (p. 34).

Clement alludes to a definite Church organization, with its two sets of officers, viz, bishops or presbyters, and deacons, and with its stated times for worship. 'It behoves us to do all things in [their proper] order, which the Lord has commanded us to perform at stated times. . . Let every one of you, brethren, give thanks to God in his own order, living in all good conscience, and not going beyond the rule of the ministry prescribed to him' (p. 35, 36).

Many passages of the New as well as the Old Testament are incorporated in the Epistle. In one place there is a direct reference to the inspiration of Paul. 'Take up the Epistle of the blessed Apostle Paul. What did he write to you at the time when the Gospel first began to be preached? Truly, under the inspiration of the Spirit (or spiritually) he wrote to you concerning himself and Cephas and Apollos, because even then parties had been formed among you. But that inclination for one above another entailed less guilt upon you, inasmuch as your partialities were then shown towards Apostles, already of high reputation, and towards a man whom they approved' (p. 41). In another place he introduces a quotation from 1 Cor. by saying, 'Let us act according to that which is written, for the Holy Spirit saith, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, &c.' (p. 16).

The book of the New Testament most frequently used by Clement is the Epistle to the Hebrews. Next to that, in frequency of reference, come the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians. There are also many coincidences with the Epistles of James and Peter. Passing by these books, the use of which will scarcely be disputed, we find evidence that Clement was acquainted with the other books in such passages as the following. 'Remember the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, how he said, Woe to that man! It were better for him that he had never been born, than that he should cast a stumbling-block before one of my elect. Yea, it were better for him that a mill-stone should be hung about [his neck], and he should be sunk in the depths of the sea, than that he should cast a stumbling-block before one of my little ones' (p. 40, 41; Mat. xxvi. 24; Luke xvii. 2; Mat. xviii. 6; Mark ix. 42). 'Being especially mindful of the words of the Lord Jesus which he spake, teaching us meekness and long-suffering. For thus he spoke: Be

ye merciful, that ye may obtain mercy; forgive, that it may be forgiven to you; as ye do, so shall it be done unto you; as ye judge, so shall ye be judged; as ye are kind, so shall kindness be shown to you' (p. 16; Mat. vi. 12-15; vii. 2; Luke vi. 36-38). '[The Scripture] saith in a certain place, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me' (p. 17; Mark vii. 6). In chapter xlix (p. 42. 43) there are expressions which suggest a reference to John's Gospel and First Epistle as their probable source. The sentence already quoted, 'Let him who has love in Christ keep the commandments of Christ,' has a Johannine ring about it, though it differs from John xiv. 15 not only in words but in sense. To have love in Christ is to have a love inspired by Christ. Still, Clement's exhortation seems to be modelled on that of the Master, as reported by John. 'By love have all the elect of God been made perfect.' Compare 1 John iv. 12, 17, 18. 'In love has the Lord taken us to himself. On account of the love He bore us, Jesus Christ our Lord gave his blood for us by the will of God.' Compare John iii. 16; 1 John iv. 9. But we might refer to other texts, as Rom. v. 8. 'More willing to give than to receive' (p. 8) is from Acts xx. 35, though the language is varied. In next sentence occurs a parallel to verse 28 of the same chapter, to which we have already referred. 'Ye never grudged any act of kindness, (p. 8) may allude to Rom. xi. 29. From Jacob 'was descended the Lord Jesus according to the flesh' (p. 29):—an expression taken from Rom. ix. 5. 'Of Him are all things' (p. 31; Rom. xi. 36). 'For they that do such things are hateful to God,—and not only they that do them, but also those that take pleasure in them that do them' (p. 32):—an obvious reference to Rom. i. 32. 'We are members one of another' (p. 40; Rom. xii. 5). In the expression 'His sufferings were before your eyes' (p. 8) there may be an allusion to Gal. iii. 1. 'Have we not [all] one God and one Christ? Is there not one Spirit of grace poured out upon us? And have we not one calling in Christ?' (p. 40; Eph. iv. 4-6). 'Let them display their love, not by partialities' (p. 23), is similar to 1 Tim. v. 21, 'doing nothing by partiality.' 'Ready to every good work' (p. 9) is from Tit. iii. 1. God 'chose our Lord Jesus Christ, and us through him to be a peculiar people' (p. 48; Tit. ii. 14). In the quotation, 'Behold, the Lord [cometh], and his reward is before his face, to render to every man according to his work' (p. 31), Clement combines the language of Isaiah with that of Rev. xxii. 12. Thus we have direct evidence that Clement was acquainted with nearly all the books of the New Testament. They contributed to form his style. They gave a biblical colouring to his mode of thought. Even when he is not quoting them with any approach to verbal accuracy, he betrays their influence. With him our patristic investigation

closes. We have traced the christian religion and Church backwards from the last quarter of the second century to the last quarter of the first. We have found that christianity, whether true or false, maintained its continuity as a phase of religious belief and life throughout that period. The scanty literature of the time has been sufficient to prove that there was no break in the continuity. Belief in Christ as a divine Saviour, and in the fact of his resurrection from the dead ; hope in the inheritance of future blessedness that he provides for those who love him ; a life of purity and humility, of expansive benevolence, and of self-denial for the good of others ; a social organization, with recognised officers, and stated times and ordinances of worship ; and lastly, an authoritative religious literature, consisting of the same books that we possess to the present day :—these vital features of the christian religion we have traced backwards, step by step, through intervening apologists, from Irenæus to Justin Martyr ; from Justin, through Melito and the Epistle to Diognetus, to Hermas or Pseudo-Hermas and Barnabas or Pseudo-Barnabas ; from these to the Epistles of Polycarp and Pliny and Ignatius, near the beginning of the century ; and from these to Clement, whose Epistle, though it should have been written as late as A. D. 97, sets forth the same gospel which he had preached in his youth, as a valued fellow-labourer of the Apostle Paul (Phil. iv. 3). The evidence we have presented is but an outline ; for exhaustive treatment of the subject the student must be referred to such works as Lardner's *Credibility of the Gospel History* ; or, still better, to the *Works of the Ante-Nicene Fathers*, as published by T. and T. Clark of Edinburgh.

XII. THE APOSTLE JOHN.

In passing from patristic to scriptural testimony, it may be well to guard against misapprehension in the outset, by stating explicitly that in conducting this investigation into the origin of the christian religion we make no assumption respecting the attribute of inspiration which the fathers ascribed to the sacred books. We have quoted their allusions to the subject, as shewing the high estimation in which these books were held by the christian community. But the question of inspiration—in so far as it differs from that of the reality of a divine revelation—is one to be discussed by believers amongst themselves, and decided upon evidence which an unbeliever is not prepared to recognise as authoritative. It would be an impertinence on our part to introduce it at this stage of our historical inquiry into the origin of christianity. And it is equally impertinent on the part of the unbeliever to introduce it for the purpose of obscuring the main issue—whether Christ was in-

deed the bearer of a divine revelation to men—by waging a guerilla warfare about little difficulties and discrepancies, whether real or only apparent. Adhering, then, to our scientific method, we use the historical documents contained in the New Testament simply as historical documents throwing light on the origin and early history of the christian religion. Our right so to use them is unquestionable; for there are no books of similar antiquity vouched for by a tenth part of the mass of evidence which attests their authenticity—ancient MSS., ancient versions, quotations by subsequent writers, and the moral and social results produced by their influence from the earliest times.

The Apostle John lived till near the close of the first century; and his Gospel and Epistles were probably not written till about or after A. D. 80. He was an eye-witness of his Master's death, and saw him repeatedly after his resurrection. The following extract bears upon the reality of his death:—
 'When they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs; but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the Scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken' (John xix. 33-36). The fulfilment of prophecy gave its special significancy to the incident here recorded, alike for John himself and for his Jewish readers; but the incidental evidence that our Lord's heart was pierced by the soldier's spear, affords conclusive proof of the reality of his death. Theories of swooning or suspended animation are put out of the question. Then John was the first of the Apostles to look into the empty sepulchre, and see the cast-off shroud, suggesting a return to life which neither he nor Peter had anticipated: 'For as yet they knew not the Scripture, that he must rise again from the dead' (xx. 9). On the evening of the same day he was present in the assembly of the disciples, when Jesus came and stood in the midst, greeting them with kindly salutation, and shewing them his hands and his side (xx. 19, 20). John had previously witnessed the resurrection of Lazarus, and other miracles. In Christ's fulness of grace and truth as well as of power John had beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father (i. 14). And he formally presents himself in the attitude of a witness to these things. 'That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our own eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of Life; . . . that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you' (1 John i. 1-3). Clearer testimony to the facts of the Gospel history, or a more competent witness, we could not conceive of.

XIII. MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE.

The synoptical Gospels, as they are usually termed, bear a close resemblance to each other. They were probably written in different parts of the world, quite independently of one another; their general agreement in the selection and arrangement of topics being easily accounted for, as they all embody the substance of an oral tradition which was repeated from time to time in the christian assemblies, and which must have tended to assume a tolerably definite form, embracing a limited range of topics, in consequence of this frequency of repetition. The verbal coincidences between them have been appealed to as indicating a direct dependence of one upon the other. But it is more probable that the writers made use of some of those comparatively imperfect narratives referred to by Luke in the Proem to his Gospel. These gospels contain many incidents that are omitted by John; and John supplies incidents and discourses not contained in them. The relation of the first three gospels to the fourth may be compared with that of Xenophon to Plato, in the account they give of the life and teaching of Socrates.

Matthew's Gospel is supposed to have been the earliest in date. Whether it was written originally in Hebrew or Greek or both, need not be here discussed. The Hebrew Matthew, as well as the Gospel to the Hebrews, which seems to have been an altered and enlarged edition of it, is no longer extant. The Greek text has not the air of a translation. If we may rely on ancient tradition, Mark's Gospel must have been written about the time of Peter's martyrdom. Luke's Gospel was written before the book of Acts, which closes with Paul's two years of imprisonment at Rome. The natural supposition is that he brought down his narrative to the date of writing. If so, both books may have been written, or revised and completed, during the two years referred to.

As witnesses, the three evangelists do not stand on exactly the same footing. Matthew, like John, was an Apostle, and thus an eye-witness of most of the events which he narrates. Luke, on the other hand, simply claims to have thoroughly informed himself by personal communication with the eye-witnesses. Mark, so far as concerns the circumstances connected with the crucifixion, was probably an eye-witness. There is some reason to suspect that he was himself the young man who narrowly escaped apprehension as a follower of Jesus, by leaving his garment in the hands of his captors (Mark xiv. 51, 52). At all events, his home was in Jerusalem. His mother's house was afterwards a resort for prayer-meetings (Acts xii. 12). Peter was there a welcome visitor, probably a habitual guest. Rhoda's gladness (ver. 14) indicates personal friendship as well

as christian sympathy : she knew his voice. In this hospitable christian home Mark associated with the leading members of the christian community : amongst others his uncle Barnabas : and had the best opportunities of ascertaining the facts recorded in his gospel. Peter's intimate acquaintance with him naturally accounts for his being employed at a later date as Peter's interpreter. And his gospel may fairly be regarded as a gospel according to Peter, inasmuch as Peter must have been one of his chief informants with regard to such facts as he had not personally witnessed.

XIV. PAUL AND PETER.

Some of Paul's Epistles—as those to the Thessalonians, Corinthians and Romans—are the earliest, probably, in date, of all the writings comprised in the New Testament. In these Epistles, as in his preaching, as reported in the book of Acts, he strenuously maintains the fact of Christ's resurrection from the dead. He attests it as an eye-witness ; for the risen Christ had appeared to him on his way to Damascus. And he recounts the occasions on which the Lord had appeared to his disciples before his ascension ; sometimes to one ; sometimes to the eleven as a body ; and one occasion to above five hundred brethren at once, most of whom were yet alive (1 Cor. xv).

The preaching of Peter, as reported in the Acts and represented by his first Epistle, gives the same prominent place to the resurrection of Christ, of which he was one of the original witnesses. 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead' (1 Pet. i. 3). Baptism doth now save us, 'by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God ; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him (iii. 21, 22).

The doctrine that God sent his own Son into the world, to die for our sins and rise again for our justification, was proclaimed by Peter to the circumcision, and by Paul to the Gentiles. The Apostles presented themselves as witnesses of the sufferings of Christ, and of his triumph over death. They had seen him, heard him, talked with him after his resurrection. They had witnessed his ascension from Olivet till the clouds received him out of their sight. Their testimony was confirmed by signs following. On this testimony the Church was founded : small at first ; cruelly maligned and persecuted ; but earnest and energetic. It grew, in spite of the world's hostility, and triumphed over the paganism that strove to crush it. Throughout the struggle of centuries its strength lay in adhering to the truths proclaimed on the memorable day of Pentecost. The

more closely we study the writings of John and Matthew, of Peter and his Latin interpreter Mark, of Paul and his assistant Luke, the clearer will our conviction become that the doctrine of the Creed was the doctrine of Christendom from its very earliest beginning as an obscure and persecuted sect.

XV. THE PROBLEM:—SCEPTICAL SOLUTIONS OF IT.

Thus far we have not proved the truth of Christianity. We have only traced its continuity as a phase of belief and life, a system of thought, feeling and action, from Irenæus to Clement of Rome, and from Clement to John and Matthew, Peter and Paul. We have traced christendom backwards to its cradle, and found that in the dimensions of infancy it had the same form as in its larger growth. Its hands and feet, its eyes and ears, its nerves tingling with sensation, and its arteries pulsing with life-blood—all were the same, though on a smaller scale. True, some differences might also be discerned. The beard had not yet grown. It was innocent of alb or chasuble, of mitre or crozier. But these are minor matters. In all that is vital the faith, hope and life of a christian in the middle of the first century were the same as those which cheer the heart and adorn the career of a christian in these latter days. The question remains to be considered: Where did the infant come from? What is the true origin of christianity? Is it from heaven, or of men?

The christian records give an unambiguous reply. Christ is from heaven; and the power by which men are changed into his likeness is also from heaven. The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. He died, that we might live. He rose from the dead, and ascended to heaven. He gives his Holy Spirit to them that ask him.

But the savan says, No: that account of the matter cannot be accepted. Resurrection—not to speak of incarnation—is opposed to all experience. Dead men do not come to life again. The belief in miracles belongs to a low stage of civilization, and cannot be entertained in this enlightened age. The rise of christianity must be accounted for in some other way.

Before discussing the grounds of this assumption, that the miraculous is inadmissible, we may glance at the other modes in which it may be proposed to account for the origin of christianity. A solution of the problem may be sought in four directions:—myth, legend, hallucination or imposture—these singly, or any combination of them.

1. Myth. We are not aware how Volney worked out in detail his theory that the life of Christ was a Solar Myth. But it is easy to see that there would be no difficulty in raking together a number of plausibilities. There is Christmas, to begin

with. The time of its observance—immediately after the winter solstice, when the days are just beginning to lengthen—indicates its origin. The birth of Christ is the birth of the New Year. Christ is the sun, viewed principally in connection with his annual course. Then the symbolism of numbers will go a great way to establish the theory. Twelve—the number of the Apostles, as well as the age at which Christ first manifested an astonishing wisdom, represents the twelve signs of the Zodiac. Thirty, the age at which he entered on his public ministry, is the number of days in a solar month. The forty days' fast is an exaggeration of four, the number of the seasons. Seventy—the number of disciples sent forth on one occasion, is a similar exaggeration of seven, the number of the planets. And so on ad libitum. Moreover, the reviving power of the sun is fitly symbolized by miracles of healing; whilst the withering of the barren fig-tree shows the effect of solar heat, especially when vital power is beginning to decay. The raising of Lazarus is enacted on the theatre of terrestrial vegetation every spring. The death and resurrection of Christ himself are the startling phenomena of sunset and sunrise. But enough. It would be equally easy to find a solar myth in the life of Cæsar or the autobiography of Barnum. Fanciful analogies may be traced between any one thing in the universe and any other. So far as Christmas is concerned, the solar origin may be granted. But there is a good deal more in christianity than an annual dinner on turkey, with mince pies or plum pudding. The religion was centuries old before the myth-festival was incorporated with ecclesiastical usage. The substitution of the christian Brumalia, if we must call them so, for the pagan Saturnalia, is a gain for civilization. It was sometimes wiser to make an inveterate custom harmless than undertake its entire suppression. Apart from historic proof that there was such a person as Jesus Christ, it is fatal to the mythic theory that the beginning of the christian era was not an era for myth-making. Myths spring out of a condition of popular intelligence similar to that of a child about three years of age. Though usually interpreted as symbols, they are not so regarded by their original framers. Their personification of nature is not a figure of speech but a rude philosophy. Intelligence, emotion, will, are ascribed to natural objects, to account for the phenomena which they present. The Jews were not in such a condition of intellectual childishness. And they were in constant contact with Greeks and Romans. Three civilizations were contending with one another for the mastery. The collision of thought with thought bred a spirit of scepticism. Every new idea had to pass through the ordeal of a severe criticism. It was not in such an age and condition of society that a solar myth could crystallize into the gospel history.

2. Legend. The myth is a pure product of the imagination. Legend has a nucleus of fact, with mythical embellishments. The myth proper has its origin in a condition of untrained mental activity which has not yet learned to discriminate between the work of the observing faculties and the play of imagination; which ascribes an eclipse, for example, to a monster devouring the moon, and forthwith endeavours to drive off the monster by hideous noises. The legend belongs to a higher level of intelligence, still barbarous, but no longer savage. Imagination is not so readily confounded with experience; but there is still an unbounded credulity. Incidents in the life of a hero are narrated to admiring listeners around the camp fire, and gain a little in the telling. The heroic grows gradually into the marvellous, and the marvellous into the miraculous. Thus in the course of a century or so a remarkable but simply human life comes to be surrounded with a halo of mythic glories. St. Patrick, a simple but earnest and remarkably successful missionary, after decapitation swims across the sea with his head under his arm. Modern scepticism rejects the miracle, but does not conclude that St. Patrick was altogether a myth—the impersonation of a Scotch mist, which may be capable of creeping across the Irish channel, even after its topmost layer has been evaporated by the sun. On the contrary it is assumed that there was a Saint of the name of Patrick. The legends respecting him are collected and carefully sifted. The purely miraculous is rejected; the marvellous may be explained as an exaggeration of the natural or conceivable; and there remains a residuum of veritable history. It is in this way that Strauss deals with the life of Christ. His account of the gospel history is thus summarized by Fisher, in his admirable work on the Supernatural Origin of Christianity (p. 348) ‘There existed in Palestine, at the time when Jesus grew up to manhood, a widespread expectation of the coming Messiah. There was also a defined conception, the result of the teaching of the Old Testament and of later speculation, of the character of his work. Among other things, he was to work miracles, such as the opening of the eyes of the blind, the healing of the sick, the raising of the dead; and he was, generally, to outdo the supernatural works ascribed to Moses and Elijah, and the other prophets of the former time. Jesus, who had been baptized by John, became at length persuaded that he was the promised Messiah. Endowed with lofty qualities of mind and character, he attached to himself disciples who shared in his belief concerning himself. He taught with power through the towns and villages of Palestine. But, encountering the bitter hatred of the ruling classes on account of his rebuke of their iniquities, he was seized upon and put to death under Pontius Pilate. Overwhelmed with grief and disappointment, his disciples, who had expected of him a political triumph, were finally comforted and inspired by the

mistaken belief that he had been raised from the dead. Hence the cause of Jesus was not crushed, but gradually gained strength. And out of the bosom of the young community, filled with enthusiastic attachment to their slain and (as they believed) risen Lord, there sprung the mythical tales which we find in the Gospels. Believing Jesus to be the Messiah, they attributed to him spontaneously the deeds which the prophecies had ascribed to that personage. In these mythical creations, the formative idea was the Old Testament description of the Messiah. This idea, coupled with the faith in Jesus, generated the Gospel history of Christ, so far as that is miraculous, and even exerted a very important influence in shaping and coloring circumstances in the narrative which are not supernatural. The Christ of the New Testament is thus the ideal Messiah. He is Jesus of Nazareth, glorified in the feeling and fancy of disciples by the ascription to him of supernatural power and supernatural deeds, such as lay in the traditional, cherished image of the Messiah.' This theory supposes hallucination on the part of Jesus; and the fabricators of the Gospel myths could scarcely be altogether unconscious that they were embellishing the career of Jesus by ascribing to him actions which they felt that he must have done, rather than knew that he did. But hallucination and fraud play only a subordinate part, and we therefore defer any further notice of them in the meantime. The principal reliance is placed on the myth-making propensity, as exercised by a simple-minded and credulous community. Let us see what this explanation of the origin of Christianity involves. (1.) We have a whole body of myths attaching to the life of a well-known Jewish Rabbi, created within a period of about thirty years. The Gospel of Matthew, even on the supposition of its spuriousness, must have been written before the destruction of Jerusalem; for neither unconscious myth-maker nor deliberate forger would have written the twenty-fourth chapter after that event. But we can trace the christian system ten or fifteen years further back. The Epistle to the Romans was written A. D. 59, and those to the Thessalonians and Corinthians some years earlier. These Epistles, incontrovertibly genuine, make abundant allusion to the miraculous features of christianity. And the doctrine they set forth is that which Paul had preached throughout Greece and Asia Minor. They really carry us back to the time of Paul's first mission from Antioch. But though we go no further back than the writing of 1 Thes., say A. D. 53, we are within less than twenty-five years of the time of Christ's death. Belief in his resurrection, and expectation of his second advent, are entertained as strenuously as at any subsequent period. Now, a quarter of a century is an allowance of time altogether inadequate for the spontaneous evolution of a whole series of mythic narratives such as we possess in the gospels. An instructive hint on this

subject may be derived from the papal law of canonization. Miracles are necessary as a qualification for saintly honours; and no saint is to be canonized sooner than a hundred years after his death. Five years would be a far more appropriate period, if the object were to ascertain the simple prosaic facts of his career; but in that case the *Acta Sanctorum* might have been written in a penny Almanac, for miracles would have been scarce. A century allows time for a good crop of legends to grow. A quarter of a century is insufficient. For men have memories. If a report were circulated to-day that Dr. Chalmers used to work miracles, or that he rose from his grave, and after some weeks ascended to heaven from the top of Calton Hill, the myth would be at once discredited by hundreds of men who knew him intimately. If the miraculous in Christ's career had been mythical, Paul's allusions to the subject in his Epistles to the Thessalonians, Corinthians, Galatians and Romans would have called forth a prompt denial from hundreds who had listened to Christ's teaching and admired his wisdom, but knew that he had laid no claim to supernatural powers.

(2.) This myth-formation grew up not among savages but in the midst of a community of men who were not indeed remarkable for learning, but possessed a fair measure of intelligence. The churches of Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, Greece and Rome, traced their origin to the Apostles. Polycarp of Smyrna, e. g., and Papias of Hierapolis, were disciples of John. It must have been by the Apostles, therefore, that the mythic incidents in their Master's life were created. But an unconscious creation, on their part, of the gospel accounts of miracles, is inconceivable. They could not have persuaded themselves that they had carried round the multiplying loaves and fishes, and gathered up the fragments, if they had not done so. They were not so stupid as to confound a vivid dream with wide-awake reality. They were not deficient in common sense. Thomas would not believe the fact of his Lord's resurrection till he had the evidence of his own senses. The proclamation of this fact was the most prominent feature in their preaching: they were eye-witnesses of it, and gave utterance to their testimony wherever they went. If the miraculous features of the gospel narrative had not formed part of the Apostolic testimony, they would have been promptly discredited by the Apostles, whose honesty is not now in question. Strauss's special hypothesis, that the gospel myths were formed in the midst of a community of ignorant and superstitious people in the remote corners of Galilee, is therefore utterly inadmissible. Such a community could not have given their faith to the churches that were planted by the Apostles all over the world.

But (3) let us examine this hypothesis a little more closely. A community of uncultured rustics are full of the Jewish ex-

pectation of the coming Messiah. Daniel's seventy works of years having expired, they are on the tiptoe of expectancy. Jesus of Nazareth appears upon the scene. In the course of his peregrinations through Galilee he happens to pay them a visit. They are entranced by the winsomeness of his manner, the wisdom of his words, the beauty of his descriptions of a pure and heavenly kingdom of which he invites them to become the subjects. They accept him as the promised Saviour, and their joy is unbounded. After a few days he departs, and returns to them no more. But he has fascinated them, as by a strange magnetic power; and the spell abides upon them for the rest of their lives. They hear of his death, and their faith is staggered for a time. They had hoped for better things. The Roman yoke was galling, and they had looked to the Messiah for deliverance. But on thinking over the matter they remember that Jesus had given no encouragement to such expectations. They had breached the subject, but he had hinted that his kingdom was not of this world, and had refused to countenance their suggestion that he should assemble an army of patriots, and prepare for war. They return to the study of prophecy. They find that the servant of the Lord was to be led as a lamb to the slaughter. This has been verified. Their faith revives. And the Messiah, after his death, was to divide the spoil with the strong. Jesus, being the Messiah, must rise again. They are prepared for this: feel, indeed, that it must be so. So soon, therefore, as a rumour of his resurrection reaches them, it is at once accepted, without inquiry. They expected nothing else. They would have been disappointed, if it had been otherwise. They see him no more, but expect that he will return to earth again, to establish his kingdom. In the meantime his image—the impersonation of all that is true and beautiful and good—is enshrined in their hearts. He is the theme of their talk by day, and the central figure in their dreams by night. In talking of him, they identify him with the Messiah of prophecy, and in their simplicity ascribe to him the miracles of healing—opening blind eyes, unstopping deaf ears, &c.,—which belong to the prophetic portraiture. As minds untrained to abstract thought naturally throw their conceptions into a concrete form, these miracles are dramatized; time, place, circumstance, are supplied to them; a body of legendary narrative accumulates; and perhaps even dreams contribute to the stock. This spontaneous growth of marvellous incident engrafted on the life of Jesus goes on within a rude Ebionite community for about forty years, when there arise some members of a literary turn, who set themselves to collect the legends, and arrange them, together with such information as they could obtain respecting the ordinary human life of Jesus, in something like chronological order. Hence our Gospels. Apostolic names may have been affixed to them, to

give them wider currency; or they may have been originally anonymous, and their ascription to the writers whose names they now bear, may have been the work of uncritical readers.—Such is an outline of the kind of process by which it may be imagined that the gospel history grew into its present shape. But is such a growth imaginable? Apart from the insufficiency of the time allowed (even Strauss claims only forty years, and we have shewn that the religion of Christ had taken literary shape within twenty-five years of his death); apart also from the fact that Jewish fishermen and vinedressers were more intelligent than the superstitious barbarians who framed the legends of mediæval Europe, and less likely to mistake dreams or fancies for facts; it remains to be explained how the mythic literature of a small Ebionite community could gain acceptance and authority throughout christendom. If the miraculous facts recorded in that literature formed part of the oral teaching of Apostles and Apostolic men before they were so recorded, the hypothesis is useless; christendom rose into being independently of its aid. But if on the other hand the miracles of the gospel history did not form part of the teaching of Apostles, and were unknown in the churches founded by them, it is incredible that these miracle-myths should have been accepted by the Apostolic churches during the life time of their founders, without one word of protest or remonstrance. We may be well assured that men who jeopardized their lives for the truth would not have been so careless or so credulous. This last supposition, however, is itself inconsistent with the hypothesis. For the Messianic idea must have operated on the minds of the Apostles as well as on those of the Ebionite community. If they did not believe in the Messiahship of their Master, they had no gospel to preach, and no motive to endure hardship in planting churches all over the world. If they did believe in it, as they must have done, then they believed that he had fulfilled the Messianic programme—that he had wrought miracles, and after his death had risen from the dead. But this faith could not be a myth for them, whatever it might be for others. For they were eye-witnesses of their Master's public career, from first to last; and their belief in his miracles could not, in the circumstances, be based on any other evidence than that of their own senses.

(4.) The legendary origin of the gospel history is further discredited by internal evidence. Legends are usually grotesque and extravagant in their character, fit for no higher purpose than to make people open their eyes in wonderment. Being a spontaneous outgrowth of popular ignorance and love of the marvellous, they deal very loosely with matters of geography, chronology and archæology. And though a single legend may possess unity, a mass of such materials, when examined as a whole, is found to be heterogeneous and self-contradictory. No

doubt a skilful compiler may do something towards harmonizing the details, by omitting some that cannot be worked into a consistent plan, and modifying others. But if we have four such compilers working independently of each other, legends rejected by one will be preserved by another; materials more or less intractable will be adjusted in different ways to what are regarded as the leading features of the narrative in the several compilations, and we shall thus have a fuller view of the original body of myths, and of the inconsistencies between them. We do not find these marks of a legendary origin in the gospel history. The miracles of Christ are simple and unostentatious and kindly. Their aim is not to make the onlooker stare, but to comfort and relieve distress. And they are full of spiritual meaning. They are acted parables. They exhibit power as ministering to love, in healing the diseased and quickening the dead. The narratives in which they are related can stand a sifting criticism, and come forth from the ordeal unscathed. A visit to the scenes which they describe impresses the traveller with a vivid sense of reality. The New Testament history, taken as a whole, is not only free from contradiction but full of hidden harmonies, which by their incidental character prove that the several documents rest on a common basis of historical truth.

3. Hallucination. There are two kinds of hallucination, viz., sensory and mental. The senses, especially that of sight, may bear fallacious testimony from a variety of causes, as catalepsy, or the delirium of fever. Mistaken perception, arising from external circumstances, as a peculiar condition of the atmosphere, or the dexterous movements of a juggler, may be placed under the same head. Hallucination of this kind, whether arising from a disordered state of sense, or from peculiar external conditions, is usually transient, though sometimes it may be recurrent. Mental hallucination, i. e., monomania, is more apt to be chronic.

This source of explanation of the origin of christianity brings us nearer the original actors in the scenes of gospel history than those we have thus far considered. A myth or legend in its ultimate form is the sum or integral of all the exaggerations and distortions through which a fact or narrative has passed, from imperfect apprehension, inaccurate remembrance, and further inaccurate recital. The ultimate basis or constant quantity, in the case of the pure myth, is some natural phenomenon, as the course of the sun; in the case of the legend, it is the human history of Jesus, when divested of the miraculous. Hallucination is ascribed to the original eye-witnesses, or even to Jesus himself. The principal events explained on this principle by sceptical writers, are the conversion of Paul, the belief of the Apostles in Christ's resurrection, and Christ's own belief in his dignity as the Messiah.

(1.) The conversion of Paul is thus explained by Renan (Fisher, p. 611). Paul, on his way to Damascus, had misgivings as to whether he was not withstanding the work of God. Often ardent souls experience terrible reactions. He had been struck with the demeanour of those whom he had persecuted, and especially of Stephen. At times he thought he saw the figure of their Master regarding him with pity and rebuke. As he approached Damascus he was fatigued with the journey, and perhaps suffering from inflammation of the eyes. People in the vicinity of Damascus are sometimes seized with fever and become delirious. He had a stroke, which cast him, senseless, on the earth. His brain was affected, whether by sun-stroke, or ophthalmia, or from being struck with lightning. In this abnormal state he had a vision of Jesus, which he mistook for matter of fact reality, the nature of delirium or trance not being well understood in those ignorant times. On returning to consciousness he found that he was blind. Having heard of Ananias, and of miraculous cures wrought by Christians, he sought an interview, was kindly received, and became calm when Ananias placed his hands on him. He was thus cured by a psychological process, his malady being chiefly nervous.

This explanation assumes a good deal, partly without and partly against evidence. There is no proof that his eyes were inflamed, or that he was predisposed to mental illusions. So far from having any misgivings, he acted, as he said afterwards, in all good conscience, and verily thought that he was doing God service. The goads against which he was kicking were not the upbraidings of an evil conscience, but the controlling providence of God, who had sent the Saviour, and was giving efficacy to his word. Paul had an energetic will and a strong understanding, so that there is no ground for ascribing to him the conflict of emotion depicted by Renan. Then as to his cure, blindness is not nervousness, that a soothing interview with Ananias should cure it. And Renan's remark respecting his conversion — 'that he had only changed his fanaticism' — does not account for his moral and spiritual transformation. He no longer relied on force, but sought to win his opponents by love. Instead of seeking to compass their death, he was ready to die for them. He not only joined a new party but became a new man.

(2.) The belief of the Apostles that their Master had risen from the dead, is also explained by Renan as a delusion (Fisher, p. 606). Mary Magdalene, lingering near the empty sepulchre, hears the familiar voice of Jesus, and sees his form, but cannot touch him. The spectre disappears, for her vision is the product of an excited imagination. But she goes to the disciples and reports that she has seen the Lord. All the subsequent interviews of Jesus with his disciples are of the same character — spectral illusions. The removal of his body from the

sepulchre, however, presents a grave difficulty. It could not have been done by the eleven disciples, or with their privacy, for their honesty is not in question. It could not have been done by the Jews, else they would have produced the corpse to disprove his resurrection. Joseph of Arimathea, the owner of the sepulchre, would not be likely to disturb its occupant. Perhaps some Galilean friends had removed the body, and held their peace about it. The folding of the grave-clothes suggests that a woman had been there: perhaps it was Mary Magdalene! Such is Renan's account of the matter. Is it credible? One point may be conceded. An excitable woman, who had recently been insane, and whose nature had been moved to its depths by the harrowing spectacle of the crucifixion of her best friend, might be a fit subject for spectral illusion. It may be remarked, however, that her failure, at first, to recognize either the voice or the form of Jesus—she supposing him to be the gardener—scarcely comports with the theory, even in her case. But what of Peter? Of Cleopas and his companion? Of James? Of Thomas and the other ten? Of the five hundred brethren in Galilee? Did none of them think of testing the correctness of what they saw, by the sense of touch? Did they all see the same spectre in the same place at the same time, and hear it speak the same words? An illusion, involving not vision only but prolonged conversations, affecting so many persons simultaneously in precisely the same way, and recurring at intervals in different companies, now to one group of disciples, now to another, is more incredible than the resurrection itself. And be it remembered that these witnesses were not hysterical women but men of firm nerve and tough sinew and brawny arm—not overwrought thinkers, with exhausted brain, and verging upon madness, from continuous toil over the midnight lamp—not gamblers, worn out with excitement and prostrated by ruin—not drunkards, haunted by the visions of delirium tremens—but healthy, hardy fishermen, accustomed to ply the oar, and prosecute their craft through the live-long night upon the sea of Galilee.

(3.) The Messianic consciousness of Jesus is ascribed to hallucination. Strauss approves of a remark of Schleiermacher, that 'Christ must have been convinced from the depths of his inward consciousness that no one else but he was referred to in the Messianic prophecies contained in the sacred writings of his people' (Christlieb on Modern Doubt, p. 389). He moreover holds it certain that Christ connected the epoch of the world's consummation with a miraculous change to be produced by God, and that he spoke of his second coming in glory to judge the world. In this respect, Strauss says, 'he appears to us not only as an enthusiast, but as guilty of undue self-exaltation' (ibid. and p. 420). He was expected, as the Messiah, to perform miracles. Sufferers everywhere tried to touch his gar-

ments. Some received benefit, through the power of an excited imagination; and these instances of cure were ascribed to his miraculous power. Successes of this kind, especially in the cure of disorders ascribed to demoniacal possession, would confirm the illusion as to his Messianic dignity.

This opinion of Strauss, that Christ was a visionary, who believed himself to be the Messiah of ancient prophecy, and the future judge of the living and dead, cannot stand examination. If Christ was no more than an ordinary man, his self-esteem cannot be regarded as the foible of a sane man; it amounted to monomania. In appropriating to himself the Messianic character, he believed that he was performing the most astounding miracles from day to day—not merely casting out devils, but healing the lame, the palsied, the dropsical, the leprous, giving sight and hearing and speech to the blind and the dumb. He even undertook to raise the dead. In this career his self-complacency never failed him. And strange to say the poor monomaniac gathered a following of disciples, who were constant witnesses of his conduct, and who unaccountably believed in the reality of these fancied wonders, and reported them to the world. The myth-making process did not, after all, originate in the superstitious gossip of a remote Galilean community, but in the brain of a lunatic. His case admits of no comparison with that of Mohammed. The Arab visionary wrought no miracles; he simply claimed to be a prophet. But the Messianic character could not be supported without miracles; the same logic which compelled his Galilean admirers to ascribe them to him, compelled him to assume the role of a thaumaturgist, and he was so insane as to believe himself successful. On this theory how are we to account for the simplicity, propriety, beneficence and spiritual instructiveness of his mythic miracles? How are we to explain his calmness, his self-consistency, his breadth of view, the marvellous wisdom of all his utterances? How comes it that never man spake like this man? How strange the fact, on the supposition of his lunacy, that he was believed on in the world! Suppose that a patient, possessed with the idea of his Messiahship, were sent forth from an Asylum, to found a spiritual kingdom amongst men, what would be his chances of ruling the civilized world for eighteen centuries to come?

4. Imposture. Modern unbelief is ostentatiously polite, and disclaims all responsibility for the charges of wilful deception that were flung at the heroes of gospel history by the infidels of a ruder age. More profound and at the same time more charitable views are entertained respecting the origin and development of religious belief. The alternative is no longer between worshipping Christ as a God or execrating him as a charlatan. A middle way has been discovered. Jesus is ranked with Socrates, Zoroaster and Confucius; perhaps he

may be placed above them. His maxims are an excellent counteractive to selfishness. And his wisdom may be called divine, ascribed to inspiration, and all that, with the understanding that these high-sounding phrases are not to be understood as denoting anything really supernatural. As to miracles, they are to be ascribed to misconception, exaggeration, or anything else that will enable us to retain our confidence in the unbroken order of nature. Unfortunately it is difficult to maintain this attitude of dignified courtesy all through. An exposition of the subject may begin with praising Christ and his Apostles, and end with accusations of fraud and falsehood; just as a writer may make great parade of candor and impartiality, and yet fill his book with the most illogical special-pleading. The sources of explanation thus far reviewed are fairly available only within narrow limits; and their further application loses all verisimilitude. The theory of pure myth is no better than a joke; for men who have no faith in Justin, Polycarp, Clement, John, Peter or Paul, will at least believe in Pliny and Tacitus. The theory of mixed myth or legend may seem to promise better results. But it is hemmed in by time-limits. Societies maintaining, in spite of unpopularity and persecution, all the distinctive features of christian belief and practice, were to be found in the principal cities of the Roman Empire within a quarter of a century from the death of Christ. It is further limited in respect to the area of that society within which the myths must have arisen. They could not have come to the body of the christian community *ab extra*, in the way Strauss suggests, because the Apostles were still alive, and would have rejected stories imported from any such source. The myth-makers must have been the Apostles themselves; and the extent to which a supernatural glory in the form of miraculous events could have been unconsciously thrown over the prosaic contents of memory must have been very limited indeed:—the more so, as the Apostles met each other occasionally, and thus had opportunity of testing the accuracy of their remembrance by talking over the scenes in which they had been fellow-witnesses if not fellow-actors.

The theory of hallucination also fails. If Christ's messianic consciousness was the delusion of a weak mind, he must have attempted, in his character of Messiah, to work miracles, and exposed himself by utter failure to the scorn or pity of the multitude; for insanity does not confer omnipotence. His success in attaching disciples to himself is inconsistent with the supposition that he believed himself possessed of a supernatural power which he failed to manifest. And if he wrought no miracles, whence the belief in them, on the part of his disciples? Myth, legend, hallucination, are all insufficient to account for the gospel history. Hence it becomes necessary to fall back, as a last resort, on the old accusation of imposture. This is

done even by Strauss, and still more freely by Renan. Strauss represents the resurrection of Lazarus as an intentional fraud. 'Tired of the cold reception with which the kingdom of God had met in the capital, the friends of Christ were desirous of a great miracle, in order that they might strike a heavy blow at the unbelief of Jerusalem. Lazarus and his two sisters undertook the chief part in this fraud' (Christlieb, p. 431). His suggestion that perhaps it was Mary Magdalene who removed the body of Jesus from the sepulchre, and thus gave occasion to the belief in his resurrection, has been already noticed.

The miracles performed by Jesus were not such as an impostor could imitate. Think of a juggler walking on the sea, or feeding thousands of hungry men with an armful of bread! But a still more conclusive refutation of the charge of imposture is supplied by his character. Had he been an impostor his inculcation of sincerity and truth would have been a constant invitation to those around him to unmask his hypocrisy and pour out on him the vials of their indignation. An impostor is never free from the risk of exposure, and naturally provides for that contingency. The creation of a high-toned moral sentiment is the creation of a scourge for his own back. It is manifestly for his interest that he should rather undermine men's sense of truth, and deaden the power of conscience, that so his conduct may be regarded with the less abhorrence if his true character should be brought to light. An honest regard for the ideal of purity and perfection which Christ presented to others would have prevented the use of imposture; and consciousness of imposture would have led to a debasement of the moral standard. Then as to the Apostles, if their Master was dead, they had nothing further to expect from him; they had no motive to induce them to propagate a false report of his resurrection. They exposed themselves to endless toils and sufferings by their testimony to the fact that he had risen. Lives of self-denying labor and deaths of martyrdom attest their sincerity.

The problem remains unsolved. The several sceptical theories, of myth and legend, of hallucination and imposture, fail to give a rational account of the origin of Christianity. The only other account that can be given of it is that supplied by the gospel history. It remains that we examine the grounds on which it is affirmed by sceptics that that history is incredible, as involving a belief in miracles.

There are three points to be considered, in reference to miracles—their possibility, their credibility, and their connexion with doctrine.

XVI. THE POSSIBILITY OF MIRACLES.

The question whether miracles are possible depends on the question whether there is a God. A miracle is a supernatural event, *i. e.* an event which does not form part of the common course of nature, but is due to the will and manifests the power of a supernatural Being. If there are no living Powers behind and above the course of nature, there can be no miracle. As disbelief in the existence of a Mind and Will higher than man's—whether in the naked form of atheism or in the poetic garb of pantheism—underlies much of the opposition to miracles in the present day, it is necessary to indicate some of the sources of evidence on behalf of Theism. There are three leading lines of argument—the cosmological, psychological, and teleological.

1. The cosmological argument infers the existence of a great First Cause from a general view of the world around us. The following particulars will suffice by way of illustration.

(1.) A First Cause may be inferred from the irregular distribution of matter in space. The universe, according to the revived philosophy of Epicurus, consists of atoms and empty space. Why is not all space equally empty or equally full? The distribution of matter is arbitrary, or appears so. Why should it be here and not there? Moreover, there are many different kinds of matter, and all of them are distributed in an irregular way through limited parts of space. How is this to be accounted for? If matter possessed the ground of its existence within itself, we should expect to find that existence everywhere, and everywhere alike. For there appears to be no reason conceivable why an absolute and ultimate necessity of physical being should stand more closely related to one part of space than to another. What is eternally necessary in one place should be eternally necessary in all places. As this is not the case, we conclude that the disposal of matter, if not also its very existence, is due to a higher Being. It is one of the functions of Will—not the highest or noblest, but one of its functions—to decide among things indifferent, or presenting objectively equal claims—to exercise sovereignty of choice. Mechanical force possesses no such power.

It may be objected that matter, in a still earlier stage of its existence than that of nebula, may have been uniformly diffused through space; and that it may have been broken up into patches through the operation of its own essential properties of attraction and repulsion. Such a supposition, however, is not admissible. If the distribution of matter through the infinitude of space was perfectly uniform, each infinitesimal part of it must have been equally acted on in all directions, and therefore must have remained for ever in a state of equilibrium. The theory of cosmical development requires an irregularly-

shaped nebula to start from, and we could never derive that from a necessarily-existing substance uniformly filling all space. The arbitrary distribution of matter, then, is a fact to be accounted for; and the only intelligent account of it we can suggest is that it indicates the prior existence and exercise of an *arbitrium*, a sovereign will, on the part of the great First Cause. And if matter owes its distribution to the will of a supreme Being, it may owe its existence to him as well.

(2.) The world contains many things that begin to be. Every plant and animal has a definite beginning of its existence as a living being. And not only individuals but species had a beginning. For the investigations of geologists shew that there was a time when there was no life on the globe.

(a.) The origin of individual plants and animals—above all, of individual men—has to be accounted for. I am conscious of being more than so many pounds of bone and muscle. I am a person, not a corpse. My personality came into existence a few years ago. Whence came it? The first answer to this question will of course refer us to the law of reproduction. But that law itself needs explanation. It is only a general phrase denoting a series of facts. Parentage is the channel through which a new personality is ushered into the world. But it does not unfold to our intelligence the origin of souls. That origin may be referred to an immediate creation. Or the souls of the parents may be supposed to contribute of their substance to form the soul of their offspring. Or humanity may be conceived of as a whole, which was created in the first man, and is distributed among his offspring. Or the doctrine of pre-existence may be carried still further back, to a former state of spirit-life and spirit-probation—say in the body of a pre-adamite ichthyosaurus. But all these doctrines carry us back ultimately to creation. The breath of the Almighty gave me understanding. And it would be absurd to suppose that he gave man a higher nature than his own. He that teacheth man knowledge, shall not He know?

(b.) The origin of species, and especially of the human species, has to be accounted for. Even if parentage could be regarded as accounting for the individual, it does not account for the species as a whole. The first parents must have been created by God. For whatever may be thought of the abstract conceivability of a parental succession stretching back *ad infinitum*, geology leaves no room for such a supposition. Man's appearance upon the earth is comparatively recent. And there was a time, vastly more remote, when even the lowest forms of life had not yet sprung into existence. The higher forms of life are supposed, by evolutionists, to have been developed from the lower; but the germ of life must have existed in the ancient fire-mist, if they were not created after the solidification of the earth's crust. How they could survive the temperature of

molten rock, is one of many things which the theory of evolution leaves unexplained. That a fortuitous concourse of mere material atoms could produce a being endowed with the faculties of thought, feeling and will, is altogether incredible.

(3.) A supreme disposer of matter, and author of all forms of life and intelligence, being ascertained or assumed to exist, it simplifies our view of the origin of the world to ascribe to Him the creation of inorganic matter as well as of vital functions. Let us say that there are sixty different kinds of matter—ultimate or simple elements. Then the question is between ascribing the origin of the world to one self-existent being and ascribing it to sixty-one. A Being who could originate all the vital and mental forces exercised by organized existences, might surely be entrusted with the humbler work of originating the physical forces of inorganic nature as well. It is a maxim of plain common sense that we should not assume more causes than are necessary to account for the phenomena. One God is sufficient to account for the origin of all things. We only embarrass our cosmology with needless complexity if we fill the eternal past with sixty-one great First Causes. The originator of the vegetable and animal kingdoms, and disposer of the Cosmos, may as well be the creator of its inorganic materials.

2. The Psychological argument is based on the operations of mind—especially those exercises of thought and emotion which are of a religious character. The idea of God arises in our minds, with peculiar vividness and force, on special occasions. Thus :—

(1.) We think of the power of God, when we need help from him. Our strength is overtaken : we are entangled in a network of perplexities : we are beset by powerful enemies : or sudden danger appalls us. We need help, guidance, protection, deliverance. In our distress we cry to him. An instinct of self-preservation impels us, when other help fails, to call on the Almighty. Man is a dependent being. In circumstances of difficulty or danger his sense of dependence calls into exercise his faith in the supernatural, and prompts to the utterance of prayer.

(2) We think of the goodness of God, as capable of satisfying us, when earthly enjoyments are withheld, or pall upon our taste. Amid severe privations or sufferings we think of God as blessed himself, and blessing those whom he receives into his favour ; and we endeavour so to comport ourselves as that we may hope to enjoy his fellowship. Even when every appetite is indulged to satiety, and every taste regaled, we are not content. The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing. In this respect, if man is to be regarded as merely a terrestrial animal, he is of all animals the most bounteously provided for, and yet of all animals the most miserable. He

has a craving for happiness that never says, It is enough. And this craving points ultimately to the enjoyment of God. Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And there is none in all the earth that I desire besides Thee.

(3.) We think of the justice of God, when we either suffer wrong or commit it. In the one case, we appeal to him as an avenger; in the other, we fear him as a judge. Conscience speaks with an authority which cannot well be understood or accounted for otherwise than by regarding it as the voice of God within us. And when that voice is flagrantly disregarded, we instinctively anticipate that he will reckon with the transgressor. The sense of obligation and of responsibility—obligation to do right, responsibility if we do wrong—is practically the most powerful of arguments for theism.

Thus the vicissitudes of ordinary life are continually presenting occasions that are suggestive of the idea of God. A feeling of dependence, a craving for happiness, a sense of responsibility, from time to time raise our thoughts to Him whose power can aid our weakness, whose favour and fellowship constitute our highest good, and of whom we are assured that as judge of all the earth he will do right. In some minds this play of the religious emotions is more prominent and powerful than in others. But it is a general characteristic of humanity. And it is frequently exhibited with peculiar force in the deepest and noblest natures. How is it to be accounted for? Does it proceed from no cause? Is it an *ignis fatuus*? How can it be explained otherwise than by regarding the mind of man as the workmanship of God? An engineer stamps his name on the machine he has constructed. A parent chooses to be trusted, loved and obeyed by his children. If God is our maker, that accounts for our bearing his signature, and for the implantation in our nature of affections and impulses that point towards him as the disposer of one lot, and the arbiter of our destiny. If, on the other hand, we are the creatures of blind chance, our religious instincts are without a cause as well as without an object.

It may be asserted, in reply to this argument, that our religious ideas and emotions are the product of education and the plastic influence of circumstances. Nor do we deny that there is some truth in the statement. Our religious views and feelings are largely influenced by instruction, example, and the whole course of our experience in childhood and youth. The child is dependent on a mother's care, and aided by a mother's kindness. The youth is subject to domestic authority and law, enforced by rewards and punishments. Habits of fraternal association and mutual helpfulness, and respect for authority, acquired in the family circle, find wider scope when he grows up to manhood and takes his place as a citizen. But why should this respect be transferred to an imaginary Being, an invisible

parent conjured into existence by a freak of fancy? The reply is that successive generations are taught by their parents to believe in the supernatural. But two things remain unexplained:—the origin of the tradition, and its vitality. Why should such a belief have taken possession of the whole human race, if there is no proper ground for it in the constitution of our nature? And how could it retain possession? Antiquated errors die out in course of time; but the belief in the supernatural is probably as strong to-day as it ever was. The fair conclusion is that it has its root in the structure of the human mind. The universality of religious belief of some kind amongst the lowest savages is strikingly attested by Mr. Tyler (*Primitive Culture*, vol. i. p. 384):—‘So far as I can judge from the immense mass of accessible evidence, we have to admit that the belief in spiritual beings appears among all low races with whom we have attained to thoroughly intimate acquaintance, whereas the assertion of absence of such belief must apply either to ancient tribes, or to more or less imperfectly described modern ones.’

3. The Teleological argument is based on evidences of design, in the adaptation of means to ends. The works of God afford evidence not only of his power but of his intelligence. For they exhibit adjustments so complicated and so accurate that it is impossible to believe the adaptation accidental. We may be unable to grasp the ultimate end of the universe as a whole; but the special end contemplated in particular adjustments may be as easily discerned in the works of God as in the works of man. In such cases the phenomena are not accounted for unless we recognise final as well as efficient causes.

The ends worked out in God's providence are various, and shed an interesting light on his character.

(1.) There are ends which we may term simply physical, relating to the maintenance of things in substantially their present order.

Thus the equilibrium of the planetary system is maintained by giving each planet a velocity sufficient to counterbalance the attractive force, and no more. If the velocity of the earth were greater than it is, it would move away from the sun in a widening curve till its inhabitants perished in a region of perpetual frost. If it were less, the earth would be drawn inwards till its inhabitants were burnt up with scorching heat. Other adjustments secure the vicissitudes of the seasons, and the alternation of day and night.

The preservation of an animal through the successive stages of its existence is secured by a multiplicity of adaptations, of organ to external element, of structure and instinct to each other, and both to habitat, on which we need not dwell.

The preservation of species is secured by a combination of organs, appetencies and social instincts—such as the maternal

affection—without which the earth would be depopulated in a few years.

(2.) Esthetic purposes are abundantly provided for. The earth might have been a smooth plain, without hill or vale—a boundless cabbage-garden, unadorned with tree or flower. But it is otherwise. The variety of scene is endless. Majestic mountain and frowning precipice, dark glen and foaming cataract, leaf and flower of every hue, placid lake and roaring ocean, the dread artillery of heaven, the gems that sparkle on the brow of night :—there is everything to cultivate and to gratify a taste whether for the beautiful or the sublime. The author of the *Cosmos* is a God of order; but the order is diversified by every imaginable phase whether of the lovely or of the grand. How natural the conclusion, if we had not been expressly assured of the fact, that when he beholds his handiwork he pronounces it very good!

(3.) Many of the contrivances of nature indicate benevolent design. In the life of sentient beings generally there is much more of enjoyment than of suffering. Even sensitiveness to pain often proves a blessing, by putting us on our guard against fatal injury. In the case of our own race there would be less suffering if there were less sin: and we have no right to blame the constitution of our nature for the consequences of our own misdeeds. Still it must be confessed that there is a formidable residuum of suffering in the world, of which we can give no satisfactory explanation. But the mystery that overhangs exceptional phenomena should not blind us to the lesson taught by the general course of providence, in doing us good, sending rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

(4.) Moral ends—the encouragement of virtue and the punishment of vice—are extensively promoted by the ordinations of providence. The inherent misery of evil passions, the remorse following their indulgence, their mischievous effect, whether on bodily health or in the formation of evil habits, the disapprobation and resentment of society, and the course of events that seem fortuitous, are often wielded as scourges and correctives of evil. The inference is that God is a moral Governor—that he loves good and hates iniquity.

These are some of the principal lines of evidence for Theism afforded by the constitution and course of nature. If the universe is God's handiwork and subject to his control, there is a power in existence that is capable of performing miracles. Whether it may be his will to perform them, is another question; but they are not impossible.

XVII. THE CREDIBILITY OF MIRACLES.

Paley's maxim, 'Once believe in a God, and all is easy,' does not meet with universal acceptance. The idea of physical law, as reigning supreme in the material world, presents a serious obstacle in the way of accepting the miraculous. The existence of law is no new discovery; it is pre-supposed by miracle. If there were no settled course of nature recognized, a deviation from that course would afford no evidence of the intervention of a supernatural power. But some scientific men are not content with the recognition of law; they insist on its absolute supremacy. 'In an age of physical research like the present,' says Baden Powell (*Essays and Reviews*, Am. ed. p. 150), all highly cultivated minds and duly advanced intellects have imbibed, more or less, the lessons of the inductive philosophy, and have, at least in some measure, learned to appreciate the grand foundation conception of universal law; to recognize the impossibility even of *any two material atoms* subsisting together without a determinate relation; of any action of the one on the other, whether of equilibrium or of motion, without reference to a physical cause; of any modification whatsoever in the existing conditions of material agents, unless through the invariable operation of a series of eternally impressed consequences, following in some necessary chain of orderly connection, however imperfectly known to us.' That the same substance, when placed in the same circumstances, will always act in the same way, must of course be assumed as a guiding maxim in physical research. An interposition of supernatural power, when it does occur, is a new circumstance, and accounts for an unusual result. The laws of causation are not suspended, but a new cause is brought into play. So far, however, as concerns scientific investigation into the powers and processes of nature, we may dismiss the subject from our thoughts. That Jesus walked on the sea of Galilee one stormy night some eighteen centuries ago, does not affect the specific gravity of the human body, or the normal properties of water. Miracles are rare; and when wrought for evidential purposes they announce their own character as deviations from the ordinary course of nature.

The assumption, however, that no modification in the condition of matter is possible, except as the necessary result of an eternal series of physical operations, though put forward as the crowning generalization of cosmical science, is altogether unscientific in its character, and cannot be established by any inductive reasoning. This doctrine of the unbroken reign of physical law may be considered on two sides—in relation to its alleged proof, and in relation to what it excludes or denies. On the positive side, it is put forth as the goal to which the progress of science inevitably tends. The advance toward it is

thus described by Dr. Temple (*ibid.* p. 488) :—' One idea is now emerging into supremacy in science, a supremacy which it never possessed before, and for which it still has to fight a battle ; and that is the idea of law. Different orders of natural phenomena have in time past been held to be exempt from that idea, either tacitly or avowedly. The weather, the thunder and lightening, the crops of the earth, the progress of disease, whether over a country or in an individual, these have been considered as regulated by some special interference, even when it was already known that the recurrence of the seasons, the motions of the planets, the periodic winds, and other phenomena of the same kind, were subject to invariable laws. But the steady march of science has now reached the point where men are tempted, or rather compelled, to jump at once to a universal conclusion : all analogy points one way, and none another. And the student of science is learning to look upon fixed laws as universal.'—Is it true that all analogy points one way ? There is a force operative in the world which does not fall under the physical category—the force of will. Mind cannot be weighed in the scales or examined with the microscope ; a dead man is as heavy as he was when alive. That Will is determined by molecular changes in the matter of the brain, and these by the action of external nature, cannot be proved by any investigations in cerebral physiology, and is directly disproved by consciousness. We will to do this or that, not from physical compulsion, but freely, and we know it. Microscopic changes in the brain may attend volition, but they are its effects rather than its causes. It is true that mind has its laws as well as matter—its regular modes of operation—but they are not of such a kind as to destroy its freedom. For instance, we usually act, in matters of serious importance, under the influence of definite motives. But the measure of that influence cannot be fixed by any objective standard of comparison. On the contrary we are conscious of possessing power to decide one way or other, in accordance with this set of motives or with that. We give artificial strength to one set of motives by dwelling on them, brooding over them, filling the imagination with them. We divest another set of motives of their natural weight by voluntarily shutting them out of our thoughts. And let it not be said that these experiences are obscure, and capable of being explained on the theory of a rigid determinism. There is no part of our knowledge less obscure than our consciousness of free agency ; and this consciousness is utterly illusive, if our action is mechanically determined by our environment. Nay more, our consciousness of will-power lies at the root of that very doctrine of causation which is invoked to crush it. Will-power is the form of causality that we best understand, because it is the only form of it of which we are directly conscious. Observation and experience lead us to re-

cognize lower forms of causality, in which the voluntary element—the freedom to choose or to refuse—is wanting. But the probability is that if we were not conscious of being causes, through the exercise of volition, the idea of cause would never enter our minds. Now this will-forme, of which no scientific sophistry can ever deprive us, is revolutionizing the course of physical phenomena every day. The mechanic who constructs a steam-engine does more to change the face of nature than did all the miracles of the Gospel history viewed as mere physical events. Physical law is so far from being supreme that we deliberately traverse it every hour of our waking existence. There is no beast of the field so mean as not to have a kick at it. Farewell to reason, as well as to freedom and responsibility, if the mechanical attraction and repulsion of atoms are to be enthroned as the supreme power of the universe! Analogy! All the analogies of observation and experience are in favour of physical law being as easily contravened by higher orders of existence as by men and animals.

On its negative side, the supremacy of physical law amounts to this: that there are no supernatural beings possessed of power to interfere in any way with the material world. If God exists, he has tied his own hands by endowing matter with definite properties:—as if it would be a breach of faith to modify, at any time, the results of their action! He launched the fire-mist millions of years ago, and then retired from the scene, to enjoy the undisturbed seclusion of the heaven generously provided for him by Epicurus. Beings of an intermediate grade between him and man do not permit us to examine them and fix their place on the zoological scale; so we are not called on to recognize their existence.—But it is proverbially difficult to prove a negative position. There is no process of inductive reasoning by which we can show that it would be improper or inconceivable that the author of nature should modify its course. Occasions might arise when it would be wise to do so. All that can be done in the way of argument is to affirm that he has never interfered, and therefore it is not likely that he ever will. But the affirmation that he has never interfered, coolly assumes the very thing to be proved. We have good evidence that he did perform miracles, for the high moral purpose of attesting the mission of a divine Saviour. This is the noblest end for which we can suppose miracles to be wrought. Their fitness for it is manifest. The presence of the supernatural—of a messenger from heaven—is shown by the display of supernatural power. ‘No man can do these miracles which thou doest, except God be with him.’ And a revelation from God was greatly needed. The moral condition of our race was out of joint. Men needed instruction in the character and will and ways of God; needed pardon; needed purity; needed peace. The goodness of God manifested in the ordinary course of provi-

dence suggested the hope that there might yet be healing for the woes of humanity. Man's need and God's goodness conspired to render a revelation credible. And a use of miracles in subordination to this mission of mercy harmonizes so fully with all that we can know of God and of his ways, that the natural improbability attaching to a narrative of supernatural events is very much diminished if not altogether removed. We maintain then, not merely that miracles are possible, but that miracles authenticating the mission of a divine Saviour, duly attested, are altogether credible.

XVIII. THE CONNEXION BETWEEN MIRACLE AND DOCTRINE.

The confirmation of a divine message, or the attestation of a divine messenger, is not the only purpose for which a miracle may be wrought. There may be miracles of providence, that have their end or aim simply in accomplishing the purposes of moral government, and that possess, apart from a recognition of these purposes, no doctrinal significance. But it is with miracles that are directly evidential in their character that we are concerned in the present discussion. The miracles wrought by Christ were of this kind. He appealed to the works which the Father had given him to do, as affording reason why men should believe in him. He ordered the sick of the palsy to arise and walk, in proof that he had power to forgive sins. And the miracles wrought in his name by his Apostles possessed the same character. Thus Paul affirms (2 Cor. xii. 12) 'Truly the signs of an Apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds.' He appeals to the miracles he had wrought in Corinth, in attestation of his Apostleship.

Miracles require to be distinguished from rare natural phenomena, from jugglery, and from lying wonders.

1. From unusual, perhaps unexampled, physical phenomena. The fall of a meteoric stone is a rare event—perhaps so rare that no living man may have witnessed its occurrence. The more unusual such an event, there is the less risk of its being employed and appealed to as an evidential miracle. No man can bring down a meteoric stone at his bidding. The prediction of an eclipse might astonish an ignorant people; but a little progress in intelligence dissipates that air of the marvellous with which the prediction was at first surrounded. That the carpenter of Nazareth should have possessed a knowledge of natural magic transcending all the resources of science accumulated in the last eighteen centuries, is a miracle too great even for the credulity of scepticism.

2. From jugglery. It might be difficult to lay down theoretical canons for discriminating between *bona fide* action and

the simulation of it by sleight of hand. But common sense is usually adequate to effect the discrimination in any given case, though it may be unable to show the precise way in which the trick is performed. Jugglery cannot calm the storm or raise the dead.

3. From lying wonders—prodigies wrought by a supernatural power, for the purpose of leading men astray. For the theoretical possibility of a miracle being not divine but diabolical is not to be denied. The character of a miracle, of the prophet who exhibits it, and of the doctrine he proclaims, must therefore be brought to the test of our intellectual and moral intuitions, in order to ascertain whether the supernatural power displayed is good or evil, pure or impure, friendly or malignant.

(1.) No miracle can convert falsehood into truth, or truth into falsehood. Truth is one, changeless, eternal. And God is true. Nothing that contradicts mathematical truth, or the plain facts of observation and consciousness, cannot be accepted; and miracles attesting it must be credited not to the God of truth but to the Father of lies.

(2.) We are further entitled to bring the character of a miracle, the worker, and his doctrine, to the bar of our moral intuitions. Deceit, cruelty, immorality, cannot be from God; miracles exhibiting or commending them must be from the devil. No doubt there may be error in our moral judgments: and even when these judgments are right in the abstract, there may be error in our mode of applying them to the details of a professed revelation. We have to train ourselves to discriminate and approve of what is right, just as we have to train ourselves to discern what is true. We are not born infallible, either intellectually or morally. But our faculties, duly cultivated, are of good service to us, and are to be used, not hid under a bushel. We may be poor mathematicians, and yet know that two and two do not make five. We may be poor casuists, and yet feel confident that selfishness and self-will are not the noblest things in man.

The applicability of the first test—that of accordance with known truth—lies mainly in the negative direction. Attestation of what is false, if miraculous, must be diabolical. The second—accordance with our sense of what is right—admits of wider application on the positive as well as the negative side. Attestation of what is wrong, if miraculous, must be diabolical. But on the other hand a study of the moral character of the christian revelation affords strong evidence in favor of its heavenly origin. The wisdom and beneficence of Christ's miracles, the blamelessness and beauty of his personal character, the purifying and elevating tendency of his instructions, powerfully corroborate the conclusion naturally drawn from the exercise of supernatural power, that he was indeed a teacher come from God.

To sum up : the natural impression produced by an act of supernatural power is that it proceeds from God. But whatever proceeds from God must be true and good ; and on the other hand Satan would not waste his energies in destroying his own kingdom. His miracles would exhibit his signature in their tendency to mislead, to ensnare, to promote in some way the cause of evil. We must therefore examine the nature of the miracle, the character of the human worker, and the doctrine he presents for our acceptance. If these are good, they are from God ; if evil, they are from the evil one.

XIX. CONCLUSION.

Let us now gather up the results of our investigation, and mark the general conclusion to which they lead us. The origin of christianity does not lie in the depths of a pre-historic age, that we should have to divine the circumstances of its rise and growth by felicitous conjecture. Christ lived at a time when men wrote books and read them. A large part of the literature of that age, and of the times immediately following, has, indeed, been lost ; but enough remains to form a stable groundwork for historical research.

The word Christianity represents a complex system of belief and life. The leading articles of christian belief are summed up in the Apostles' Creed—the most characteristic being those which relate to the person of Christ, his dignity as the Son of God, his mission into our world to save sinners, his death on the cross under Pontius Pilate, his resurrection, and ascension to heaven, where he prepares a home of endless happiness for his people. Looking beneath acts to principles, the mission of Christ is a manifestation of divine love. The christian life corresponds to this doctrine, and springs out of it. Family and social relations are recognised, in accordance with the dictates of general ethics ; but the ruling principle of christian life is higher than domestic kindness or enlightened patriotism. 'The love of Christ constraineth us.' That love to man which Christ inspires makes no exception even in the case of enemies ; for when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son. Love to God finds expression in devout worship, and in lives of submission to his will and consecration to his service. Some of the special ordinances of worship possess a monumental character, by commemorating particular facts in the Gospel history. Thus the Lord's Supper commemorates the death of Christ ; and the weekly observance of the Lord's day, as well as the yearly observance of Easter, commemorates his resurrection. Baptism, in its unchanging formula, conserves the primitive creed of christendom. This combination of faith and life—faith in the love of God, who sent his

Son to save us, and life, moral and religious, wherein we manifest a love like his—is set forth and commended in those authoritative documents which depict the teaching and the career of Christ and his apostles. Clearly, then, we do not account for the origin of Christianity unless we explain the formation of the christian creed, the adoption of the christian morality, with its self-denial and its readiness to forgive, the historical significance of the ordinances of Christian worship, and the place occupied, from the earliest times, in the esteem of the Church, by the christian Scriptures.

Starting then, with the undisputed fact that christianity exists to day, in the hearts and lives of multitudes who believe its doctrine, practise its morality, observe its ordinances, and treasure as a sacred possession its authoritative literature, we have traced it backwards, up the stream of time, to within a quarter of a century of the death of Christ. Here it was necessary to pause, before announcing a final conclusion. When we examine the Gospel narrative, we are brought face to face with miracles. Now it is not denied that there is an improbability attaching to narratives of the miraculous. The question therefore naturally arises, whether the origin of Christianity can be rationally accounted for, independently of miracle. Various theories were glanced at—as of myth, of legend, of hallucination, of imposture—only to be rejected. The difficulty cannot be evaded. We must look it in the face. Are miracles impossible? As the matter depends on the will of God, and his will is guided by his wisdom, it is evident that in one case a miraculous interposition would be incredible, viz., when the ends accomplished by it are unworthy of the divine wisdom. It is possible, however, that the standard by which we estimate the relative importance of things may be different from God's. And whilst our attention is occupied with some trifling consequence of a miracle, its true end may escape our scrutiny. It becomes us, therefore, to guard against precipitation in rejecting a miracle on account of the seeming silliness of its purpose. Admitting, however, that many narratives of the miraculous are deservedly rejected on this ground, the question remains, whether a divine interposition is to be held as incredible, when a worthy object may be secured by it. When God made the world, did he take a vow that he would never touch it with his finger? Did he make a covenant with each atom of matter that he would never mar or modify the action of its forces? If the world consisted of mere material atoms, and nothing more, it might be admitted as probable that there would be nothing better than to let things take their course. But God is a moral governor. His subjects require to be dealt with according to their conduct. That conduct is free, and does not form part of the mere course of nature. Obedience or disobedience has no necessary connexion with the obliquity of the ecliptic

or the course of the trade-winds. And it does not seem probable or even conceivable that a concatenation of physical sequences that has no necessary connexion with the course pursued by free agents should be adequate to accomplish all the purposes of moral government in relation to them. To some extent we know that moral purposes are worked out by means of physical law, as when a man's health is destroyed by sinful indulgences. But it is only to a limited extent that the purposes of moral government are thus secured. All analogy of the human to the divine would lead us to expect the occurrence of emergencies that would call for direct interposition; and the wonder is, not that such interposition should take place, but rather that there is not more of it. The mission of Christ, however, is no mere act of ordinary administration, as it would be to strike down a daring blasphemer, or rescue a persecuted saint. The end secured by it—the salvation of sinners, and their restoration to God's fellowship—is the noblest we can conceive of. God is thereby glorified, whilst man is blessed. Whilst, then, the miraculous, viewed generally and in the abstract, is improbable, man's need of redemption from sin and sorrow, from darkness and death, lends credibility to the Saviour's mission, with all its miraculous attestations. The strength of the evidence for the miracles of the New Testament far outweighs any improbability that can be reasonably charged against them. That evidence consists not merely in the testimony of the writers who narrate them—as John and Matthew—but the testimony of the whole christian Church of primitive times, partly as witnesses themselves, and partly as recipients of the testimony of other witnesses besides those who wrote the books of the New Testament. That testimony was communicated, for the most part, orally; but there were also documents in circulation in early times, less complete than our present gospels, but giving substantially the same account of the person and career of Christ, and bearing testimony to his wonderful works.

The origin of the christian religion cannot be intelligently described without referring to some of its leading features, as already enumerated. So far as regards its fundamental principle—the personality of God—it is a continuation of Judaism, as Judaism was of the religion of the Patriarchs. In short it is a *theistic* religion; and for the historical origin of Theism we must go back to Abraham, to Noah, to Enoch, to Adam. But the characteristic articles of the christian creed are those which relate to Christ:—the facts of his life, and their significance. We have traced the existence of a community founded on a belief of these facts back to the middle of the first century. We have shewn that at that early period there were christian churches in the leading cities of the Roman empire. They were exposed to persecution, which tested their sincerity. The

faith they clung to was not an abstract speculation, like the emanation theory of the Gnostics, but a series of plain matters of fact, which had transpired twenty or five and twenty years before, that is, at a time within the distinct remembrance of men of middle age. A large portion of the membership of these churches consisted of Jews, many of whom had been resident in Palestine at the time of Christ's public ministry, and were more or less personally cognisant of the circumstances connected with his death, resurrection and ascension. Those who had not been eye-witnesses had at least come into contact with eye-witnesses, and heard their testimony. The existence of the christian church at the time when Paul wrote his first Epistle to the Thessalonians—its hold on Palestine, Syria and Asia Minor, not to speak of countries further west—and its largely Jewish membership, cannot be rationally accounted for otherwise than by the actual occurrence of the facts on which it was based, and to which it testified. For these things were not done in a corner: their publicity was a guarantee against deception. And they were not of such a character as to hold out any inducement to a false assertion of them; for the name of a dead man could promise no reward for a life of anxiety and danger, often of suffering, sometimes closed by martyrdom, in bearing witness to a lie. The resurrection of Christ was the most prominent fact set forth in the preaching of the Apostles; and of this fact the witnesses were not a few. It was moreover attested by the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, and by the miracles which confirmed the Apostolic testimony. The resistless force of such evidence accounts for the firm faith of christians in the middle of the first century; and on no anti-miraculous theory can that faith be, in the circumstances, adequately explained. The accordance of the gospel history with the messianic expectations of the Jews was very imperfect. They expected the anointed Prince of ancient prophecy to be a conqueror, not a martyr. But had the accordance been closer than it was, it could not have created an illusive belief in the plain palpable facts recorded in the evangelical narrative. It is true that the religion of the Old Testament was a preparation for that of the New. Its ritual exercised the moral sense, set forth the need of expiation for sin, and gave expression to faith in the placability of God. Its prophecy told of brighter days to come, and of a son of David who should be David's Lord. But its messianic utterances were not easily harmonized with one another. They were like pieces of a puzzle, which we know not how to fit together. They awaited the actual life of Christ, as the key to solve their difficulties, and combine them all into one consistent picture. Thus it is the historical Christ that explains prophecy, rather than prophecy that accounts for a belief in Christ.

A similar remark may be made with reference to the doctrine

of a future life. It was not altogether unknown under the Old Testament; but it occupied only a subordinate place. The subject was seldom alluded to; and allusions to it, when they did occur, were usually vague and indefinite. Life and immortality were brought to light by the Gospel:—first in the personal ministry of Christ, and then specially by his resurrection from the dead.

Christian morality is the application and outflow of the Christian Creed. It is summed up in love, to God and to our fellow-men. Attempts have been made to lower our estimation of Christ as a moral teacher, by detracting from his originality. Thus parallels to the golden rule have been found in Greek poetry and in the Talmud, to the effect that we should not inflict on others an injury that we would not like others to inflict on us. It has been well observed in reply, that there is a great difference between the positive and the negative form of the maxim. The one enjoins active benevolence; the other, mere abstinence from wrong. But the chief superiority of christian over heathen or even Jewish ethics lies not so much in the moral standard it prescribes as in the motive power it applies to bring us up to the standard. A sense of the love of Christ, in laying down his life for us, evokes a depth of gratitude, and an enthusiasm of admiration for the heroism of self-sacrifice, by which we are impelled to follow in his footsteps. The moral elevation of the christian character, as contrasted with the selfishness and vice of paganism, was very conspicuous in the earliest ages of the church, and is best understood as an inspiration flowing from the presence and example of a divine Saviour. Such results do not flow from toying with a poetic myth, or from accepting and propagating a lie. The bondage of sin is too real to be dissipated by the play of fancy; and the heights of self-forgetting heroism are not to be won except by serious and earnest climbers. Levity of mind is fatal to success. It is the truth that makes men free.

It cannot be doubted that the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper have been observed continuously in the Church ever since they were instituted by Christ. Connected with each is a form of words setting forth its significance. In the formula of baptism the Son and the Holy Ghost are set forth as objects of faith co-ordinate with the Father. Such a formula could not have had its origin in a community of Ebionites. The Lord's Supper sets forth the breaking of Christ's body and the shedding of his blood for the remission of sins. The efficacy of his death for this end was attested by his resurrection. And the injunction to shew the Lord's death by this observance *till he come* implies the further fact of his ascension to heaven. The Lord's Day, another ordinance dating from Apostolic times, commemorates the fact that he rose from the dead on the first day of the week. The prominent place held

by his resurrection in the faith of the primitive church is further attested by the early introduction of the festival of Easter, the oldest of all the christian anniversaries. Thus the doctrines of Incarnation, Atonement, Resurrection, Ascension, Second Advent, are interwoven with the texture of the most ancient ordinances of the Christian Church. By tracing the observance of these ordinances back to the time of the Apostles, we prove, beyond the possibility of question, that the doctrines thus set forth and embodied were held and taught by them. Then we have their own writings, and those of their disciples and fellow-labourers. The authenticity of these writings is vouched for, not merely by their existence in hundreds of manuscripts, and in a variety of ancient versions, not merely by the esteem in which they have been held by christians in all ages, not merely by the copious citations made from them by christian authors, but especially by the accordance of their contents with all that we know respecting the creed, life and worship of christians in apostolic and immediately post-apostolic times. Of the origin of this creed, life, worship and literature only one satisfactory account can be given :—that the religion they embody is true ; that it is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

ERRATA.

- Page 1, erase second line of Title.
" 3, line 36, read *self-denying*.
" " " 37, place the comma after *second*.
" 16, " 11, erase *in some passages*.
" 29, " 15, for *soul* read *seal*.
" 44, " 18, " *Melito* read *Papias*.
" 48, " 31, " *savan* read *savant*.

